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LUKE POLWHIL, STRONG MAN AS HE WAS, FELT FAINT WITH SUDDEN, TERRIBLE FEAR.

## A WAIF FROM THE SEA

[NOVELETTE.]

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

### CHAPTER I.

**I**T do look a bit dirty to-night, Ben," said the speaker, a sturdy, young seafaring man, scanning the horizon and noting the leaden-looking clouds which were gathering and listening to the mournful wail of the wind and the scarcely less mournful scream of the curlew, which seemed to know that a storm was brewing.

"Aye, there's many a one alive an' in full belth now that this time to-morrow will be 'er propetty!" the old man replied.

"You're at it again," exclaimed Luke, dismally.

"I knows ther'll be a storm, an' when a storm's i' the air I mun talk o' they things."

"Talk of what, Ben?" cried a cheery young voice, and a very handsome boy of about fourteen came up to the place where the fishermen were mending their nets and scanned their faces with an amused smile hovering about his lips. "Why, Luke," he continued, "you look as grave as though you were going to attend your own funeral! What has Ben been saying now?"

"It's all along o' they books wot you lend 'im, Mister Dudley. 'E were bad enow afore, but now——" and an expressive shrug ended Luke's sentence.

"Oh, no, Luke!" the boy said, merrily. "I am sure the 'Ancient Mariner' could not

make anyone worse than he was before. Why Ben might stand for his portrait."

"Don't say that, sir," said Luke, with all a true Cornishman's superstitious horror. "I can't abear ter think o' 'im wi' sich a gashly thing roun' his neck."

"Hum. I suppose, Luke, nothing would induce you to kill an albatross?"

"No, sir; not for the world full o' gold."

"As I have not anything like that bribe, I shall not be able to tempt you, Luke. But Ben," turning to the old fisherman, "what were you saying about a storm making you talk of things?"

Delighted to have a more interested listener than Luke Polwhil, old Ben launched out into all the gruesome and ghoulish tales with which the coast of Cornwall abounds.

He told his youthful hearer of the various

phantom vessels which were said to haunt the English coast. How one of these always appeared in a storm, but when help was sent out to reach her, the delusive barque would disappear just as the boats came alongside of her, and how the next day a veritable ship would be wrecked with all souls on board in the exact spot where the phantom vessel had appeared.

He told of another ship whose crew consisted of the ghosts of condemned sinners, who serve one hundred years, and then each has a short tour as captain.

Then he would tell of the well-known spectre, the "Lady with the Lantern," who haunts the beach at St. Ives during storms, always searching for the drowned body of her child, and give thrilling descriptions of the will-o'-the-wisps which he declared were not confined to marsh lands, but were often to be met with at sea, he himself having seen them, sometimes in a single flame, which was supposed to be Helena, the sister of Castor and Pollux, and lead people to suicide by drowning sometimes in groups of spectral lights which burned blue on the distant wave, hovering over some drowned seamen's graves.

These and sundry other such-like stories Ben Marling would relate to the bright-eyed boy, who listened so eagerly, and who, while half incredulous, yet felt his flesh thrill with a nameless feeling of awe, and his heart quiver under the influence of shadowy terrors as the wiry, weather-beaten old salt told his gruesome tales with a firm conviction of their verity.

Luke Polwhil always shook his head and moved away when Ben "got aun to they sperrits," as he termed it. Not that he disbelieved in the slightest.

Like most Cornish fishermen he was intensely superstitious, but, unlike Ben, he never cared to talk openly of what he firmly believed in. Having finished the work on which he was engaged, he sauntered away, leaving the old man and the boy together seated on the beach.

Ben Marling, who had lived all his life in the neighbourhood, never thought of the beauty surrounding him; it was all the same to him in summer or winter, in sunshine and storm; but for the boy who was only in Cornwall on a holiday ramble with his tutor, it possessed a charm that shewed, young though he was, Dudley Crewsdon had the temperament of a poet, easily affected and impressed by the glories of Nature.

He and his tutor, the Rev. Mark Fenton, had been on a tour, but when they had come to Pengarth the boy had insisted on remaining there, and the clergyman, who was a quiet, easy-going man, had yielded to his pupil's wishes that the remainder of their summer holiday should be spent in the picturesque Combe which contained the humble dwelling that sheltered Ben Marling and Luke Polwhil.

Nothing would satisfy the boy but taking up their temporary abode there, and though the Reverend Mark hummed and objected at first, when he found there was no woman to attend to domestic matters at the cottage, he had to give way to his pupil's importunities, and allow their knapsacks to be unpacked in that humble abode.

He was agreeably disappointed when the first meal was served; the potato-pie was excellent, the fish, fresh from the water, cooked as only a sailor knows how to do it, the clotted cream, that delicious product of Devon and Cornwall, in splendid perfection and all cleanly served, though it must be confessed the table linen was coarse, and the knives and utensils of the commonest description; but this could not detract from the flavour of the appetising Cornish dishes provided.

Luke Polwhil was an orphan, and Ben Marling had taken the child and brought him up as his own. The two got on very well together, and never quarrelled, only Luke did

not like to hear Ben speak of the phantom ships and ghosts.

Dudley Crewsdon was delighted with the old man's conversation, and in return for his stories of "ghaistesses" lent him the "Ancient Mariner" and other books, which Ben eagerly pored over, taking portions to heart, much to Luke's dismay, who thought his elderly relative was already too much inclined to indulge in gloomy fancies and predictions.

Luke would row the young visitor out in his boat to some wonderful caves and tunnels, and show the lad how, in not far distant times, the smugglers used to outfit the Preventive Service men, and hide the barrels of contraband spirits in what seemed to Dudley nearly inaccessible places.

"Haven't I seen the Death-Ship mores'n wance wi' all sails set, an' haint I seen her fa-ading away, sinking doon in the sea till there was aunny the spray curlin' on the waater; an' didn't I know there'd be some good barque lost, an' warn't it always so?"

This was the burden of the old man's story he would repeat from time to time with slight variation, appealing to Luke for corroboration of his story. The latter would be obliged to admit that certainly whenever Ben had reported that he had seen the Spectre Ship the next day or so there was sure to be some terrible shipwreck.

"But, Ben!" the boy asked mischievously, "how do you know that the objectionable siren, Life-in-Death, was in your haunted ship? Did you never see her before I lent you the books?"

"In coorse I seen her, Maister Dudley," Old Ben returned with an offended air: "I seen her afore, only I didn't know her name nor wot she be, an' then sometimes the Fantum Ship's far out at sea; an' then I can't say whose aboard. But last night—and he lowered his voice impressively, "I seen her."

"I begin to think Luke is right, and I ought not to have lent you those books, Ben. You are mixing up the Phantoms belonging to other parts of the coast with your own particular Cornish ones," laughed the boy.

"Wall," returned Ben, philosophically. "It fits in like. When I says Deadman's Isle, I means Deadman's Rock."

"Deadman's Rock?"

"Aye, Maister Dudley."

"Why, is Deadman's Rock near here?"

"So it be."

"Whereabouts?"

But the old man's vanity was a little ruffled, and it took some coaxing on the part of the boy to draw from him the information.

"That—that big rock which he could see to the left were known to the older sailors by that name."

"And that is where your ship went last night?"

"Aye."

"Well, Ben?"

"I tell ye, Maister Dudley," and the old man spoke with a strange earnestness that impressed the boy in spite of himself; "I saw that ship, an' I saw her sail, an' I watched, fur I knowed that where she went down there'd be a wreck; an' I saw her go straight to Deadman's Rock, an' I saw her quiver and shaake, an' her sails fall doon waun by waun, an' then I see her pitch head forrard into the water, though never a sound could I hear, an' Maister Dudley, there's soom good ship a-coomin' to her grave yonder, mabebe this very night, as sure as there's a storm a-brewin' in that leaden sky."

"Ben, can nothing be done?" Dudley exclaimed, infected by the old man's solemnity.

"Nothing," laconically.

"But surely some warning might be sent?"

"How should it, an' how are we to know wot vessel is doomed by she?"

Dudley could not but acknowledge the force of this reasoning, and Ben went on—

"Na, na, we canno' stop it, all we can do is

ter have the boats ready, an' if we hears signals of distress, go out an' try if we can saave any dear lives. But, Lor' bless ye, there ain't much chance of that. Maist a' the people that is on that doomed ship, wha' ever they may be, will soon be all drowned corpses!"

This was Ben's ultimatum, and nothing could shake him from it. There was bound to be a wreck, and a wreck there would be. No power on earth could prevent it.

Though neither Ben nor Luke would have been above a little smuggling had it come in their way, yet they looked with horror upon the deeds formerly done by Cornish wreckers, when false lights were shown, and many a noble vessel was lured to destruction by such base means simply for the plunder that might fall to them; when life was held as naught in the balance with ill-gotten gold; and both men, whenever a wreck took place, were always foremost in trying to save life and property. And now they, in common with the rest of the seafaring community, made all preparations to be ready should the storm, which was already gathering in force and fierceness, bring with it the wreck that Ben Marling so confidently foretold.

## CHAPTER II.

Dudley Crewsdon was an only child.

The squire of Crewsdon Hall traced their descent back in an unbroken line from the days of Williams the Conqueror.

More than once titles had been offered to them, but they had been invariably refused. They were Crewsdons of Crewsdon Hall in the days of the Conqueror; they would be simply Crewsdons of Crewsdon Hall to the end of the chapter. Still, in spite of this, they had been allied in marriage to the highest in the land.

Another unwritten code of honour among the Crewsdons was that no one of low birth should be raised to the position of mistress of the wide domains which had been held by them for so many hundred years, and through so many changing fortunes.

The wife of the reigning squire must be a lady by birth. Poor she might be, but her genealogy must be unimpeachable.

Crewsdon Hall was a queer, many-gabled structure of no particular style of architecture, or, rather, it was a jumble of many conflicting styles, for it had been added to and partly rebuilt at several periods of its existence, so that there was scarcely any of the original building left.

If the house had not much to recommend it to the view, the grounds could by no means share the same reproach; they were simply magnificent.

Stretch after stretch of swelling upland rolled away as far as the eye could reach. Belts of stately oak, forests of larch and fir, formed part of the domain over which the squire of Crewsdon held sway.

Close to the house, but detached from it, was a small church, to which villagers were admitted, the Squire giving orders that the great gates should always be kept open on Sundays.

The privilege was gratefully received, and on Sunday the whole church-going population of the village of Crewsdon would be seen trudging along, attired in their best, to hear Squire's parson preach.

The congregation usually did not muster more than fifty souls all told; but then all the inhabitants of the village did not attend Squire's church.

Roderick Crewsdon was a man of about forty. Stalwart and fair, he possessed most of the characteristics of the ancient race from which he sprang. Kindly and genial, he was generally liked both by his equals and inferiors; but, underlying his bonhomie was that intense pride of birth which he inherited from his line of ancestors.

Much as he loved his only child and heir, Dudley, he often told himself he would rather see the lad in his coffin, though with him



would and the ancient race of Crewsdon, than live to bring home a low or base-born bride to reign in the place now occupied by his own gentle, aristocratic wife.

It was with secret misgiving that the loving mother let her boy depart when he was old enough to go to school, but her fears were set at rest when he came home for the holidays looking strong and well. In his holidays Dudley was not allowed to totally give up his studies, his father's chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Fenton, superintending two or three hours' reading every day.

So matters went on until Dudley had reached his fourteenth year, then the Squire, rather alarmed for his wife's health, had by the doctor's advice taken Lady Alicia to Italy for a time, and so it came to pass that Crewsdon Hall was shut up, and the Squire made arrangements that the Rev. Mark should go with Dudley on a holiday ramble.

Thus it was that Dudley Crewsdon came to be staying in Ben and Luke's humble cottage under the brow of the cliff at Pengarth.

That evening at tea Dudley could talk of nothing but the expected shipwreck, and the phantom vessel which old Ben declared he had seen the night before going on her spectral way until she disappeared on that fatal spot, appropriately named by the sailors of olden days, "Dead-man's Rock," for it had been the cause of many a brave man's death.

At high tide it was submerged, and the currents round it were so dangerous that before those on board a vessel were aware of their danger the ship would be drawn by some irresistible force straight upon the jagged points of the concealed rock and hurled to destruction beneath the boiling, angry waters.

Mr. Fenton pooh-poohed the idea of a spectral vessel. It was absurd to think that such things could be in these enlightened days of steam, telegraph, and electric light. It was all very well in the olden times of darkness and superstition, when nobody knew any better, but nowadays no one should be so credulous and cling so tenaciously to these weird, but baseless, fancies.

Luke happened to be present when Mr. Fenton thus expressed his opinion.

"Aw, sir, it be aul very fine what you say, an' I ain't got nothin' to say 'bout that ship Ben says 'e see las' night. I ain't seen it, but what I doe know is that I hae seen mountains—aye, an' cities too, an' when we made straight for 'em they've gone clean away. We've drav right through the place where we seen them an' there was nothin' but water all round."

"But, my good man," Mr. Fenton said, eagerly, "that is perfectly true. You may have seen castles, lands and islands; all that is easily explainable; it was simply the reflection of those places you saw in a mirage."

Explain as he might, however, the atmospheric phenomena, he could not convince Luke. The clergyman, recognising the futility of trying to combat the man's belief in supernatural agencies, turned the conversation by asking whether there was a lifeboat on that part of the coast.

"Yes," responded Luke, "there be one, but it's only within the last five year it's been put here. You see the coast is so very rocky it are difficult to launch it; an' we hadn't wan till a gentleman whose only son was drowned by a vessel goin' on that very rock, he giv one in memory o' his boy."

"I have not seen any house for it," remarked Mr. Fenton.

"No, 'twas no good tryin' to build a house for it. How could it be launched from the top o' they rocks?" demanded Luke.

"No, indeed; I was wondering how you managed."

"Wal, we just used a cave fur it. We hae built a stagin' so as ter keep it from bein' carried away, an' there's a little bit o' beach which we can run it over w'out gettin' it stove in.—There's Ben a callin' me; I mun

go, but I'll coom an' tell 'e, Maister Dudley, if anythin' 'appens," and Luke hurried away to don his sou'-wester and waterproof clothing ere venturing into the stormy night.

And it was a storm! even Mr. Fenton did not remember having seen a worse one.

In response to his entreaties, Dudley was allowed by his tutor to remain up, though on no account would the latter permit the boy to go out into the raging elements, as he wished to do.

It was indeed a wild, weird scene that Dudley looked upon—a scene such as he had never witnessed before. Owing to the projecting walls of cliff that enclosed the little bay where Ben Marling's cottage was built, only a small portion of the ocean beyond the cove could be seen from the spot where young Crewsdon stood. Still, the site of Dead-man's Rock was there, and, after Ben's tale of the Phantom Ship, that was the point round which the greatest interest centred for that youthful watcher; and in spite of the flashes of lightning that were almost blinding at times, he could not be induced to leave his post or retire to bed.

Even the placid Mark Fenton was not altogether proof against a feeling of restless expectancy, induced, perhaps, by the electric current in the air.

Occasionally Luke would come in and report that up to the present they had seen no signs of any vessel in distress, though everything was ready and the men all prepared to launch the lifeboat in case of need.

So the night wore on, and Mr. Fenton was thinking that he really must exercise his authority, and insist upon Dudley's going to bed whether there was a shipwreck or not, when he was startled by an exclamation in an excited tone from the boy, just as an exceedingly brilliant flash of lightning threw a lurid glare over the heaving blackened mass of curling waters that was raging over the sunken rock.

"Oh, Mr. Fenton!" Dudley cried, breathlessly, "a ship is there; I saw her. I saw her quite plainly. Ben was right."

"Nonsense, my dear boy," the Rev. Mark returned. "Your fancy must be playing you tricks."

"Indeed, it is not, sir. I assure you I saw a large ship distinctly."

"I hope not, Dudley," and Mr. Fenton's voice was very grave. "I trust it is only imagination on your part, for, if true, Heaven help the poor creatures on board! I fear they will be lost."

"Look, sir, look!" the boy cried, excitedly, as another flash illuminated the scene.

"Good heavens! there is something there!" the clergyman exclaimed, catching the boy's excitement.

And at that moment the sound of a gun boomed out of the darkness, a signal that some craft was in deadly peril, and in sore need of assistance.

"Oh, sir, do let us go out!" Dudley said, entreatingly.

"My boy, we could do no good," Mr. Fenton replied, sorrowfully. "We cannot assist the souls perishing there; we should only be in the way of the brave men who are risking their lives, for see—" pointing to where several lights were to be seen hastily moving to an fro in the darkness, looking like Will-o'-the-wisps as they flitted hither and thither, "they are evidently preparing to launch the lifeboat by the light of their lanterns."

Had he been alone, Mark Fenton would have been out among the men, giving such assistance as he could; but if he went now he knew that Dudley would insist upon accompanying him, and his duty was to keep the boy entrusted to his charge from coming to any harm, and he could not leave his pupil alone while that frightful storm was raging.

For some time Mr. Fenton and Dudley remained silent, both eagerly watching to see what would be the next scene revealed in the

terrible drama unfolding before them in the darkness of the night.

"They are sending up rockets," Mr. Fenton said, as the lines of fire shot up into the sky, only to be extinguished in the murky gloom that reigned around.

"Do you think Luke and Ben will reach her in time to save life?" Dudley asked in a low voice.

"Cannot say, my boy, in that terrible sea. We can only pray that they may do so. Good Heavens!" startled out of his usual equanimity. "What is this?"

"Do you see that light, sir?"

"Yes, I see it."

"What can it be? It looks as though it came from the ship."

"I am afraid it does."

"What can it be? It is getting larger."

"I fear, Dudley—"

"Yes, sir?"

"I fear that vessel yonder is on fire."

"If it be so they are doomed," the boy cried, in horror-struck accents. "Luke and Ben and the other men will never be able to reach her in time."

"We must hope that they will," Mr. Fenton said.

"No, sir, they cannot," Dudley returned.

"How can you tell that, my boy? It may be hours before she burns to the water's edge. The boats will have plenty of time to reach her before then."

But Dudley shook his head with an air of conviction. He did not like to own it to his tutor, but he was deeply impressed with Ben's idea that not a soul on board would be saved, and the curious coincidence of the wreck occurring so soon after the old man had declared there would be one, and on the very spot indicated, made the boy more than ever assured there was more in Ben's assertions than Mr. Fenton gave them credit for.

"Luke has told me, sir, that in fair weather it would take more than an hour's hard rowing to reach Deadman's Rock, because of the contrary currents; they must go a long way out before they can head for it; and in dirty weather he says it is almost impossible to make it at all. Look! Look now!" he continued, excitedly. "She must be one mass of flame for us to see it so plainly. Oh! please do let us go out!"

Almost as excited as the boy, Mr. Fenton could no longer refuse to listen to his entreaties, and, salving his conscience by seeing that Dudley was as well made up against the fury of the elements as circumstances would permit, they were both soon out in the raging storm.

It was a terrible scene, and yet there were elements of grandeur in it.

The most fearful sight of all was seen when in the distance, seaward, in spite of howling wind, which drove them every way, in spite of torrents of rain, which seemed to have not the slightest effect upon their fury, burned the fierce flames which were enveloping a noble ship in total destruction, and driving its horrified crew and passengers to choose between two frightful deaths, either to remain on board and be roasted alive, or jump overboard, with the almost perfect certainty of being drowned or dashed to pieces by the cruel waves on the jagged points of the concealed rock which held their good ship fast in its fatal embrace.

"This is a terrible thing, Davies," Mr. Fenton said to one of the men, who was standing in a sheltered spot, where the overhanging cliff formed some sort of a protection against the rain and wind.

"Aye, sir, it be," Davies responded, making a speaking-trumpet of his hands. "More'n one wreck I seen on yonder rocks, but never afore hae I seen a ship afire."

"Is there any chance of the lifeboat's rescuing the people on board?"

The man shook his head doubtfully.

"I canna say, sir," he answered. "They be good men an' true in the boat, and they'll aul do their best. But I'm doubtful. You see when the Fantum Shi-ship has been seen it's

pretty nigh certain that aul aboard the craft that's doomed will be dooned!"

Mr. Fenton moved impatiently.

How deep-rooted the superstition of the Phantom Ship seemed to be in the minds of these hardy Cornish mariners!

Everyone he spoke to had the same idea.

Because Ben Marling had declared that he had seen the spectral barque, this vessel, with all the human souls on board, was doomed.

If that was their belief why did some of them risk their lives in an endeavour to save any of the unfortunate beings in such deadly peril of their lives?

Why should they do so if it were practically useless?

He put this question to Davies, who seemed rather perplexed how to answer it.

"You see, sir," he said, at last, "it would be a standin' disgrace to us if we didn't try, no matter how unlikely we think it will be that we should saave anyone, and then we mout, there's no knowin'."

"Have Ben Marling and Luke Polwhil both gone in the boat?" here asked Dudley.

"Aye, aye, sir," Davis said. "We most on us takes it in turn, but they two most allays goes."

"Have you not another boat that could go?"

"Na, sir, no boat but the lifeboat could live in such a sea. 'Twould aunly be committin' suicide to attempt it. We'd be out fast enough if we had anythin' t' go in, but we ain't got nothin' that'd live save the lifeboat!"

"I wonder where she is now?" I cannot see her," Dudley Crewsdon exclaimed, as a flash for a moment illumined the scene.

"I specs she've got round the bend," the man said. "Heaven saave us, what's that?"

"Why, she've bust up, sartain sure!" two or three voices exclaimed simultaneously, as a tremendous flame was seen to shoot up high in the air, throwing out showers of sparks in all directions, and then was suddenly extinguished, leaving only blank darkness in place of the lurid light they had been watching so long; while distinct across the noise of the raging waters, higher than the roar of the gale, or the shriek of the frightened sea-birds, came an ominous sound that blanched the faces of the sturdy fishermen, and told them that now, indeed, all help would come too late.

For a few moments no word was spoken.

The disaster enacted before their eyes made them speechless, as they knew how utterly powerless they were to render the slightest assistance.

Then Mr. Fenton, removing his hat, in a few simple words that went straight to the hearts of the rough fishermen around him, offered up a prayer that the Almighty would receive the souls of those who were now passing from death to life eternal!

### CHAPTER III.

The next morning broke calm and clear.

Nearly every vestige of the storm had vanished.

The sun was shining brilliantly. The wind was hushed to soft murmurs.

The birds, such of them as had escaped from the fury of the tempest, were twitweeting and chipping about the branches as though none of their companions were lying with their feathers ruffled, cold and dead among the debris caused by the storm of the night before.

Only the water still heaved angrily, as though not satisfied with the victims it had received for its share, running into the cove with less force, certainly, but with white crests to its curling waves, that washed over the spot where the burning vessel had been engulfed.

After witnessing the catastrophe Mr. Fenton and Dudley had returned to the cottage, but neither of them felt in the mood for bed, and the Reverend Mark made no objection when the boy expressed a wish to sit up until their humble friends should return.

It was four o'clock in the morning ere the gallant fellows returned from their perilous,

and, unfortunately, useless expedition; wet through, worn-out and weary, but more depressed from their failure to save any lives than from mere physical exhaustion and discomfort.

"I knawed 'twould be useless," old Ben remarked as he removed the life-belt that had been secured round his body, changed his soaked clothes for dry ones, and took his chief solace, a short black pipe, from the mantel-shelf and, after having deliberately filled it, placed it between his teeth.

"I knawed they were aul bound fur Davy Jones's Locker afore I iver see 'em on Dead-man's Rock. She warn't playin' her game fur nothin, I knawed."

Luke, to whom this speech was addressed, said nothing, while he too disencumbered himself of his wet garments; then he remarked, oracularly, "Ben!"

"Wal, laad?" the old man returned, seeing that the younger one paused, "what bee'st wantin' t' say?"

"Dost think eny wan mout be waashed oop along t' cove?"

"Mout, lad, but I scarcely specs so. Most on 'em bodies hev been carried out to sea, en Heaven only knaws whether eny of 'em will be seen agin."

"I thinks I sull go doon an' see; it will be light shortly nup, an' there mout—"

"Na, na, laad," old Ben interrupted. "Tain't no manner o' use o' your thinkin' you'll fin' eny one alive. Ye'd better turn in fur a hour or two, time enuff fer luke oot then; they'm all copped long afore this. No livin' thing could exist in that ragin' sea. Ye lie doon for a little fust."

Luke, feeling thoroughly tired, took his advice and threw himself down upon his narrow pallet, dressed as he was, but three or four hours elapsed ere he awoke and remembered the task he had set himself.

Hastily he prepared some breakfast for their lodgers, and snatching a few mouthfuls himself, he left the cottage and made his way to the beach, to find that several men were there before him, searching for any traces of the ill-fated vessel that might give a clue to her name and from what port she sailed.

But nothing, not even so much as a charred timber, was thrown up in the little bay; for all that was to be seen there no tragedy need have been enacted a short way out at sea in the darkness of the previous night.

Finding there was nothing to be done there, Luke prepared his boat, determined to row across to the Great Turk's Cavern. He knew that sometimes things had been cast up there before from wrecks.

He was shoving his boat off when Dudley Crewsdon came up to him. "Where are you going, Luke?" he said.

"I be goin' to the Great Turk, Maister Dudley," Polwhil returned.

"Take me with you, Luke," the boy cried, eagerly.

"No, Maister Dudley, I'de better not. The sea's a bit roughish still, an' Maister Fenton mout not like it."

"He will not mind, and the sea is not at all too rough for me to go on it. You will take me, Luke?" and he place one hand entreatingly on the young sailor's brawny arm.

"Ef I thowt Mr. Fenton wudn't mind," began Luke, in a hesitating manner.

"He will not, or if he does I will take all the blame," said Dudley, seeing he had gained the advantage, and he jumped into the boat as Luke took the oars, and by his powerful strokes soon had them out of the sheltered bay and in the rougher waters beyond.

No word was spoken by either till they passed near the spot where the vessel had apparently been the night before. Then Dudley said:

"Is it not strange, Luke, that there should be no wreckage floating about here?"

Polwhil glanced at the boy curiously for a moment before he answered.

"Ben wud saay 'twarnt curious at all, Maister Dudley."

"Why, Luke?"

"'Caus, you see," he began, then suddenly checked himself, as though he thought better of what he was going to say, and added, lamely, "It's the currents."

"Yes; but, Luke, the currents would hardly sweep away every vestige of a large ship in a few hours."

"They mout."

"Tell me," the boy continued; "did you get near her last night?"

But for some reason Luke did not seem to wish to be communicative on the subject.

"Not very," he returned.

"It must have been an awful sight."

"It were. I hopes I maay never see another like it," with a shudder. "When you sees dozens o' your fellow men a bein' blown into eternity et's enuff to shake one's nerves. But here we are. Mind, Maister Dudley; it's ticklish work landin' 'mong these ere rocks when ye're not 'customed to et."

The place to which he had rowed was a stretch of grey sand that could only be reached from the sea, the cliffs towering high above in inaccessible height. Here, extending for some way inland, were three caverns, known as the Great, the Lesser, and the Small Turk's Head.

From the narrow strip of beach there were two openings, one into the Great, the other into the Lesser Turk's Head, but the Small Turk's Head could only be reached by traversing a narrow passage so low that one could not stand upright in it, which led from the outer cavern, or Great Turk's Head.

Luke drew his craft up on to the beach, which was strewed with heaps of seaweed, with the usual flotam and jetsam thrown up by a storm mixed among it.

Luke carefully went over the heaps of seaweed. Then he walked through each of the caverns in turn, but beyond coming across some dead gulls he found nothing to reward his search.

He was getting his boat ready to return, when he was startled by Dudley's voice, calling to him in eager, excited tones.

Young Crewsdon had strayed away round a projecting point of rock, and, fearing that he might have got into some harm, Luke ran hastily towards him.

The boy was standing partly in the water, with his eyes fixed on an object that was floating on the surface, but beyond his reach, though he had gone over his knees into the sea in an endeavour to get it.

"Luke! Luke! here is something at last!" he cried, excitedly.

"Coom out o' the waater; ye'll catch cold," he said, as dashing in himself up to his waist he succeeded, after considerable difficulty, in getting the object ashore.

"What is it, Luke, a chest?"

"I—I dunno. I thinks so, an yet—"

"I wonder what's in it?"

"We'll soon see. I've my knife. It doesn't seem over strong. I daresay I can prize et open."

It was with some little trepidation that Luke forced open the cover of the box.

When he had done so a startled exclamation rose to his lips—an exclamation which quickly brought Dudley to his side to gaze with equal amazement at what was revealed to their astonished eyes.

For there within, lying as placidly as though asleep, the delicate lace-trimmed garments scarcely even damp, a slight pink flush on the soft cheeks on which the long lashes of the closed eyes rested, was a young child, scarcely more than a baby!

Luke remained spellbound; but Dudley, recovering from his astonishment, bent down, and, with one timid finger, gently touched the soft cheek of the infant.

"It's real! I thought it was a doll, but it's flesh, and, oh, Luke," once more laying his fingers upon the peach-like skin, "it is warm!"



"Ye don't say so, Maister Dudley," the man returned, with a startled look.

"It is. Perhaps it is alive. Help me to get it out, Luke, I cannot move it."

The boy was endeavouring to remove the tiny creature from its resting-place, but it seemed to be fastened in.

As if to keep the tiny inmate of this floating ark from rolling about, and so being knocked about and bruised against the top or sides, it was securely lashed to the pillow by a couple of scarves of foreign-looking material wound round its tiny body and limbs, the ends of which were then secured to the woodwork, so that, no matter how the wooden receptacle might be dashed about by the wild waves, the tiny occupant would be protected from harm, the down pillow rising up in billows around.

In a wonderfully gentle manner the rough fisherman removed the lashings and extricated the babe from its wooden prison.

"Ye're right, Maister Dudley, it's alive," he said, after carefully examining it.

"I am so glad," exclaimed the boy, delightedly. "Luke, who can it belong to? and why was it so carefully done up in that box?"

"I specs, Maister Dudley," Luke returned, slowly, "that this babe must hae been aboard that ship which was burned las' night."

"What makes you think that?"

"See here," and Polwhil turned up the wooden case. "This hae been scorched as though it had been through a fire. I think someone, a woman fur sartain, hae thought o' this as the only means a' givin' her darlin' a chance o' escapin' frae a fiery or watery grave. She must hae got the carpenter to put it together, for it ware doon in a tremenjus hurry, I'll warrant, fram the waark."

"I believe you are right, Luke. Let us see whether there is any writing to tell who this poor little waif of the sea is."

Dudley turned over the contents of that rough cradle, through the lid of which holes had been bored to prevent the helpless little prisoner being suffocated; but, though the care with which everything had been prepared seemed to point to Luke's shrewd theory being the right one, no scrap of paper rewarded his search.

Luke, who had been holding the tiny creature awkwardly, but tenderly, in his brawny arms, now remarked, after examining it critically:

"I'm thinkin' there's something quare about this little critter."

"Why, Luke?"

"Wal, 'tain't natural for a infant ter be so quiet; they're allus squallin' when they ain't eatin' or sleepin'."

"This one is asleep, is it not?"

"I'm doubtful. No, 'tain't dead, Maister Dudley. I don't mean that. It's alive safe enuff. Just listen to its breathin'; but its sleep ain't natural. You see, 'twould hae waked long agone wi' al this 'andlin' ef et ware."

"Perhaps something was given to it to keep it quiet during that storm and its dangerous voyage. Poor little thing!" and the boy's voice grew suddenly tender as he looked at the little rosebud face. "Think, Luke, how dreadful it would have been if it had woke up to find itself alone, and to die of hunger and thirst in that narrow prison."

"I guess that's why summat was given et, an' I thinks, Maister Dudley, we'd better taake it back to Pengarth as quickly as possible. It must be nearly twelve hours since it's had anythin' 'taat, for I guess whoever tuk such trouble about its soft bed also gav it summat to keep it alive, knowin' that, mebbe, it might be days afore it ware found."

"Luke, I am so glad I came with you, and that you thought of coming here."

"Why, Maister Dudley?"

"Because she"—he had quite made up his mind the baby must be a girl, because its skin was so soft, and its hair so golden—"because she will belong to you and me now."

Some strange feeling stirred Luke's heart. He looked down at the tiny bundle in his arms, and a sudden wish to keep this treasure that the sea had given up came over him. He would like it to be his own, that he might guard it and work for it.

How pleasant it would be to see its graces unfolding day by day, to listen to its innocent prattle, to feel its tiny arms thrown round his bronzed neck as it welcomed him home after his day's work, and then he stopped short suddenly in his musings.

"Most likely 'twill be claimed," he said, aloud. "They clothes show 'tis no common person's child. It belongs to the quality, same as you."

"Of course we must give her up if she is," Dudley returned, in a disappointed tone; "but I should like to keep her for my own."

It was an echo of the man's wish. Was it a prescience of what was to come in the future?

"Maister Dudley," Luke said, abruptly, "the 'Parson' will be wonderin' whaat's become o' ye."

"So he will," young Crewsdon returned, now for the first time remembering how anxious his tutor would be at his prolonged absence. In the excitement of the discovery he had forgotten him and the fact that he had come away with Luke without acquainting him of his intention to do so. "We had better return at once."

"Can ye carry the chest to the boat? Stay, tho', we'd better put the child baack in its nest, an' so tak' it along wi' us," Polwhil amended.

This suggestion was at once acted upon. Luke placed the box in the stern, bidding Dudley "hae an' ee t'it sae that it should'n't tilt overboard;" but there was no need for this injunction, for the boy at once seated himself beside it and watched with wondering eyes and anxious care this strange treasure that the sea had given up.

It did not take Polwhil very long to row back to Pengarth, as he had both wind and tide in his favour.

When they arrived at the little bay they found Mr. Fenton and Ben, who were about to embark in another boat for the purpose of going in search of Dudley, old Ben surmising that he had gone with Luke, as the latter's boat was absent.

"Why, what have you there?" he cried in amazement, as Dudley raised the sleeping infant in his arms and slipped ashore.

An explanation followed of the whole facts of the case.

"Strange," he said, "very strange indeed, that that infant should escape from such a terrible storm as that of last night. You feel sure, Luke, that this chest came from the burning vessel we saw?"

"I be 'most sartain, fur ye can see where 'twood is scarched, an' where else could it o' come from? Folks aboot here doan't dress their kids like this!" and Polwhil touched gingerly, as though he were afraid of harming it, the soft lace and muslin of the little frock. "Still, I couldna sware t'it, 'cause I niver seen it throon o'erboard."

"Extraordinary," muttered the clergyman. "The ways of Providence are inscrutable. To think that poor mite should weather the storm, and so many stalwart men should have gone to their deaths." Aloud, he said,

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Carry it to the cottage at once, an' then see one a' the wimmin wull coom an' do fur it," Luke responded, promptly.

No sooner said than done. Luke took the child from Dudley's arms, replaced it in its nest, and carried the whole bodily up to the cottage, and then went to find a suitable nurse among the women of the hamlet.

Before he returned, to Dudley's great delight the little girl opened her blue eyes after turning about once or twice, and there and then commenced to cry.

"She is hungry," cried the boy, and getting

some milk he raised the tiny mite to a sitting posture, and held the cup to her lips.

The crying ceased, and the child drank thirstily; then her great blue eyes wandered from his to the faces of the two men, who were both regarding her with a perplexed stare, as if searching for someone she knew, and not finding the person she wanted the tiny mouth quivered, and calling out, "Mamma, mamma!" she recommenced her weeping.

It was in vain Dudley tried all his boyish arts to soothe her. The little one was not to be comforted, and it was not till Luke returned with a buxom young woman, who had children of her own, that she yielded to the maternal blandishments and hushed her grief on her breast.

Then was held a consultation as to what was best to be done with the tiny creature, and it was finally resolved that they should advertise in the London and country papers with a view to discovering her friends. Meanwhile, she would remain at the cottage.

A girl was temporarily engaged to look after the child, and Dudley, who seemed to think that in some way she belonged to him, wrote to his mother a glowing account, and requested her to allow him to contribute to the expense of keeping the little one till her friends were found.

Lady Alicia, who never denied her son anything in reason, at once answered that she herself would defray the keep of the child, and the wages of a nurse, and under these circumstances Ben had to withdraw his objections, for the infant would be no addition of expense to their slender resources.

Luke did not like the arrangement. He had an idea that the child he had saved would never be claimed; in fact, he secretly hoped so, and he would have liked her to be totally dependent on him, to look up to him for everything, and the charity of another, even though done in the most delicate fashion, annoyed him.

But he was poor, and the cottage belonged to Ben, and he had no voice in the arrangements made by his elderly relative.

The latter had set his face against Luke's keeping the child at first, should her relatives not turn up.

"Bewnae a' one ye hae saaved frae droonin' shell waark ye harm!" he had said, but when he heard of the Lady Alicia's proposed liberal allowance for her keep, he changed his tune, and, like Luke, almost wished she might never be claimed.

And she never was.

#### CHAPTER IV.

The years rolled on.

Ellaine, as Dudley had insisted on calling her, remained an inmate of Ben Marling's cottage.

Strangely enough, nothing was ever discovered of the ship which had met her fate on Deadman's Rock in such a terrible manner.

Inquiries were made at Lloyd's, but though several ships were reported missing with all hands, and were never seen again after that fearful night, yet it could not be ascertained which of them was the one which had been burned to the water's edge off the wild coast of Pengarth.

It was all conjecture, too, as to why the infant had been enclosed in that chest.

Some inclined to the idea of crime—that this was some child whose relatives were interested in getting rid of it, and that it had never been on board the burning ship at all; and this theory was somewhat borne out by the fact of there being no scrap of writing in the box, no initial even on the Lilliputian garments about it.

But others again declared this was absurd. What but a mother's love would have found this means of giving her darling one chance for its life?

And the careful manner in which it was wrapped up and fastened to prevent injury,

and the holes bored in the top to give it air showed conclusively, to their thinking, that not murder, but safety, was the object with which it had been enclosed in the box.

Be that as it may, no clue was ever found to Ellaline's identity.

That she was the child of wealthy parents her clothing seemed to indicate, and as she grew up she displayed all the traces of gentle birth.

Her soft skin, aristocratic features, slender form, and delicate hands and feet, all showed that indefinable something which blue blood and ancient lineage are alone supposed to bestow.

There was nothing plebeian about the little maiden who ran about the rocks at Pengarth, and made the sunshine of Luke Polwhill's life.

No one could tell her exact age. Though very small when first discovered, it was found she could walk fairly well, and could speak a few words in baby language.

Mr. Fenton guessed her to be from eighteen months to two years old, but this, like everything else about her, could not be satisfactorily settled.

Dudley was so delighted with this new plaything that he sought and obtained permission from his father and mother to prolong his stay at Pengarth for two or three weeks beyond the time when he should have returned to school; and he spent the whole of that time looking after and playing with his tiny protégée.

He spent the whole of his pocket-money buying toys, dolls, and sweets for her, and the little girl showed her appreciation of his kindness by toddling about after him, and putting up her little rosebud mouth to be kissed whenever he produced a fresh gift.

She soon grew accustomed to her surroundings, and ceased to cry for "mamma."

If she showed a preference for anyone it was for Dudley Crewdson, who was not too old to be a playfellow for her.

But she was also fond of Luke, who would carry her about on his shoulder, and give up any work he might be engaged in did she want to be amused.

It was with the greatest reluctance at last that Dudley was obliged to bid farewell for a time to Pengarth, and the tiny fairy who had all unconsciously wound herself into a place in the boy's heart, but he could no longer delay, so with much regret and many promises that he would come again next year to see her and Ben and Luke, he, with Mr. Fenton, took his departure.

Ellaline cried a little for her playfellow, but she was too young to miss anyone for long, and transferred her affections to Luke, who did his best to spoil her.

Indeed, it was curious to remark the strong man's affection for the little fragile child thrown upon his care.

He would carry her in his arms for miles. He would hush her to sleep with the gentleness of a woman, and no mother could have been tenderer than this great rough man in humouring all her little whims and fancies.

Ben, when he was in his superstitious moods, would shake his head over Luke's idolatry of the child. "She'll wark ye haarm one o' these days," he would mutter, half to himself.

Once when Luke heard him he said, "Doan't ee talk nonsense, Ben."

"Taint nonsense, laad. She's boun ter do it, she can't elp it. One as ye've saaved fer the sea will bring ye sorrow as sure as there's a sky above ye."

"Ben, I do wish ee wudn't taalk like tha't," Luke said, irritably. "What harm could yon poor tiny mite do? An' as fur saaving life, I aint ye doon it mony a toime!"

"Aye, I hev."

"Wal, where's the haarm coomed 'that'?"

"I saaved 'em, true, laad, boot—"

"But what?"

"I aint kept 'em," very significantly. "They gonod awaay an' I never see 'em no more."

"I'm not goin' ter give oop my little Ella

fur an' tha't. Why, she maakes the plaace quite different, more home-like," Luke said, as the object of their conversation clambered up on his knees and tried to twine her little arms around his brawny neck. "You love me, little one?" he continued, tenderly.

"Iss, I loves ee," she lisped.

"I doan't deny but she's a pritty little gal, an' the leddy's money cooms in handy-loika."

"I wish she didn't send it," Luke said, moodily.

"Hey, laad, but we couldna keep t'child wi'out it. There's the lass to be paid an' the extry food. You'm not able ter see to the little wan wi'out some petticoat t'assist ye."

This was perfectly true. Willing as Luke was to take charge of Ellaline the mysteries of washing and dressing such a delicate piece of humanity were beyond him.

True to his promise, Dudley Crewdson returned to Pengarth every year to see how his waif of the sea was getting on; and in time the child began to look eagerly forward to those periodical visits.

The lady Alicia Crewdson was prevailed upon by her son to come down with him to Cornwall on one of these expeditions so that she might see for herself what a beautiful child Ellaline was growing.

Lady Alicia accompanied Dudley to the cottage to see the little girl he raved about. She expected to see a pretty, golden-haired, blue-eyed child, but she was fairly startled when she saw the delicate loveliness of the tiny maiden who received her with a grace of manner and *aplomb* that rivalled her own, and would have done credit to a lady of the Court.

Ellaline at this time was about seven or eight years old, and was a child of whom any father or mother might have felt proud. It is rare indeed that such beauty is seen in one so young, and added to this the tiny maiden seemed possessed of a very sweet disposition.

Of course, she had her little childish whims and fancies, but was so lovable on the whole that it was no wonder rough, stalwart Luke Polwhill cared for her with such tender affection, or that rugged old Ben Marling's face lighted up when she ran to greet him on his return from his daily labour.

Dudley was delighted with his mother's genuine admiration of Ellaline, and was very grateful to her when she said she would undertake to have her well educated.

But Luke Polwhill, who looked upon the beautiful child as in some sense his especial property, would not hear of his darling being sent away to a boarding-school, and Lady Alicia, recognising that the man had some right to have a voice in the matter, waived the point, and Ellaline was sent as a day-boarder to the best school that the neighbourhood of Pengarth afforded, and it was also arranged that the Reverend Mark Fenton should give her the benefit of his learned instructions whenever he accompanied his pupil to the Cornish village, which, up to the present, bounded her knowledge of the world.

So Ellaline grew up in the clear, pure air, beautiful in mind and body, a very child in her innocence and artlessness, a woman in her unconscious fascination and charm.

Sixteen years had passed since she had so mysteriously been given up by the treacherous sea, and the passing of those sixteen years had but developed into the beauties of the opening rose the promises the bud had shadowed forth.

There was not a maiden in or near Pengarth that could vie with Luke Polwhill's Sea Rose for beauty; and so Dudley Crewdson, long ago emancipated from college and tutors, and now a handsome man of thirty, thought, as, after an absence of some years in India, he paid a visit to the well-known cottage in Pengarth.

When he had last seen her she was a beautiful child of twelve or thirteen, who kissed him frankly as she bade him a sobbing good-bye; now he found her an extraordinarily lovely girl—nay, a woman, for all her years could not have numbered more than eighteen, with all a woman's most fatal power of fascination.

He came upon her seated upon the rock which had been a favourite resting-place of hers when a child, and though he had not seen her for four or five years, and she had grown from child to woman in the interim, he could not mistake the glorious, dark-blue eyes, now gazing out seaward, or the sheen of the golden hair, which seemed to have caught some of the sun's rays and imprisoned them.

She was dressed in some very simple white material, but simple though it was it could not hide the grace of the undulating lines of her figure; the thick-soled shoes could not disguise the symmetry of her small feet, or the sunburn disfigure her slender fingers.

Her coarse, straw hat was off lying beside her, and the sea-breezes were gently ruffling the golden curls on her brow, lingering lovingly as though they liked thus softly kissing unbeknown one so fair.

Dudley Crewdson felt his heart strangely stirred as he gazed at her, himself unseen for awhile.

It was with a start that he recognised the fact that here, unknown, nameless, friendless, save for the charity that had succoured her in her darkest hour of need—here was the woman alone out of all the world that he loved and would choose to be his bride.

Insensibly, though he had not noticed it, his love for the tiny girl he had helped to rescue had grown with his growth till the image of Ellaline had enshrined itself in his heart, preventing any other woman's entrance there. That was the secret of his non-impressibility to the charms of female influence.

Ellaline alone reigned in his imagination, and seeing her now in the full flush of her youthful beauty, fanned the smouldering embers into a sudden fierce flame that would be quenched only in death.

"Ellaline," he said, softly, at length, rounding the rock and standing between her and the restless, heaving sea, on which her luminous eyes were dreamily fixed: "Ellaline, have you no word of greeting for me? Have you quite forgotten me?"

With a cry of delight the young girl sprang up, a soft blush tinging with roseate hue her fair face. Holding out her hands though, in so doing, she dropped both hat and book on the damp sand, she exclaimed joyously, "Oh! Dudley, you have come at last."

"Why, little one," he said, tenderly, as he drew her towards him in the old caressing fashion he had used when she was a child, "have you missed me?"

"So much," she returned, ingenuously. "The time has seemed so long since you were here last."

"Nearly five years."

"Yes, but they were such long years to me."

"But I have come at last, as I promised."

"I knew you would."

"How did you know it, Ella?"

"Because you said you would return, and so I waited," she answered, simply.

"My little darling," he murmured, passionately, beneath his breath.

She went on:

"I have often waited for you here, for you remember, Dudley, it was here we parted. Ben said you would not come back, but Luke and I knew better."

Somewhat this allusion to Luke Polwhill jarred upon Dudley Crewdson's feelings. He could not account for it, but so it was. "So you and Luke both made sure of my return," he said, trying to speak lightly.

"Yes, but why did you not write to let us know you were coming?"

"I wished to give you a surprise. I only arrived in England last week, and, Ellaline, of course, I was obliged to go to Crewdson Hall first before I came down here."

"Certainly, you must have been anxious to see your mother after such a long absence."

"Poor mother, she is not very strong. She sends all kind wishes to you, Ellaline."

"Lady Alicia has been very kind. She has come here occasionally to see me, and she



writes me such nice letters asking after my progress in my studies. I have left school now, Dudley."

"In fact, you are quite a grown-up young lady, Ellaline."

"And, Dudley, your mother actually asked me on a visit to Crewsdon Hall. Was it not good of her?"

"Dear mother, it is just like her. No one can equal her for goodness." He spoke enthusiastically, for the affection between mother and son was very strong, and the kindness shown to Ellaline touched him strangely.

"She said nothing to me about it. But did you enjoy your visit?"

"I did not go, Dudley."

"Not go!" he echoed, his astonishment plainly depicted on his face.

"No."

"Why, what reason had you for not accepting my mother's invitation?"

Ellaline hesitated a moment. Then she said,—"

"Luke—"

"Luke! What reason has he for interfering?" interrupted Dudley, half-angrily.

"Luke thought that it would be better for me not to go!" she returned, rather timidly.

"Confound his impudence! I beg your pardon, Ellaline! I should not have said that, but it makes me angry to think my mother's advances should have been met by a refusal. What could Polwhil mean by such conduct?"

"Do not be angry, Dudley," Ellaline said, pleadingly. "Luke meant it for the best. He would not do anything except for my benefit; he is too fond of me for that!"

Dudley made an impatient movement. He did not wish to hear that any other man should look with eyes of affection upon this lovely girl.

Already the demon of jealousy was entering his soul.

Ellaline went on, without noticing her companion's discomposure:

"Luke thought, and old Ben agreed with him, that it would only unsettle me for my quiet life here if I went among your grand friends; and then, too, my clothes would not have done to wear in your home, Dudley!"

"Your clothes! What is the matter with them? They are fit to wear anywhere," Dudley said, glancing admiringly at the graceful figure before him, the homeliness of the garments she wore not detracting from her beauty in his eyes.

And, manlike, he could not see why what suited her so well here on the rocky beach, where only an occasional fisher-girl, with tucked-up skirts and bare legs, was the sole representative of Pengarth fashion, would not have suited her there as well; forgetting or ignoring the fact that her simple cottons and homespuns would have been totally out of place among the rich brocaded velvets and gleaming satins and silks worn by the women of his mother's acquaintance.

But, young and simple as she was, Ellaline understood that it would not have done for her to go unless she could have been dressed more appropriately. Why, Pauline, Lady Alicia's maid, wore clothes that were far better than her own.

No; Luke was right. It was best that she should remain at Pengarth, leading a peaceful wholesome life among the fresh seabreezes, untroubled by care or sorrow.

She was totally unconscious of the secret reason underlying Polwhil's unwillingness to let her go away from the safe, if obscure, shelter of Pengarth.

Yet there it was, Luke Polwhil, the brawny, rough fisherman of forty, loved this sweet treasure that the sea had given him—loved her with a deep, undying affection that was none the less powerful because it was repressed.

Rough, unlearned, superstitious as he was, he recognised the rare beauty of the girl, who had been so strangely cast upon his care.

Here, in Pengarth, she seemed to belong to him.

She made the sunshine of that humble home, but well he knew where she to go away into that great world that he had heard of she would be lost to him for ever.

Others would see and admire that loveliness—would want to win her for their own, and then what chance would there be that his humble devotion would meet with any reward?

He felt that he was not worthy of this bright, particular star, but yet he knew that no polished gentleman would give her a pure, more disinterested affection than he, the poor Cornishman.

But of all this Ellaline was happily ignorant. But she was fond of Luke in a calm, placid fashion. She regarded him much as she would a very indulgent father who had never addressed an unkind word to her, and who had guarded her childhood and early girlhood from every harm.

But as to love—such love as he felt for her—she had no more idea of that than the waves that were so calmly rippling in the warm sunshine at her feet.

"Oh, Dudley!" she said, in answer to his last remark, "you say so because you have never seen me in any other, but if I were amongst richly dressed ladies, you would think me a dowdy, indeed!"

"I should never think you anything but the dearest girl in the world, no matter how you might be dressed!" he returned, looking so tenderly into her soft blue eyes that they drooped beneath his earnest gaze, and a slight flush rose to her fair cheeks.

"Have you come to stay, Dudley?" she asked, after an embarrassed pause.

"For a week or two," he answered, "that is if you think I can put up at the cottage for a short period."

"Oh, yes!" she said, "there is plenty of room if you can put up with our simple ways."

"Of course, I can, Ella; you do not suppose that my stay in India has spoiled me for such things as your famous cream and preserves? I assure you I shall appreciate them all the more after the curries and kabobs that I have been accustomed to—lately."

"Luke and Ben will be so glad to see you again," she said, as they neared the cottage.

"Will they?" he replied, vaguely. He had a lurking suspicion that he might not be so welcome to one at least of the men as he was to her. He was nettled at the way in which Luke Polwhil had interfered with his mother's intention of having Ellaline to stay with her. It was presumption on the man's part. He could not expect to keep such a pearl of great price hidden away in that remote village; she was formed to shine among the great and the grand of the land.

Whatever Luke's private feelings might have been there was no want of cordiality in his greeting of the young man, whom in times gone by he had been wont to call "Maister Dudley." The best room was given up to his use. The best fare their simple *ménage* could afford was placed before him, and everything that was possible was done for his comfort.

Dudley Crewsdon gave himself up to the enjoyment of the hour.

There was no doubt about it, he was becoming head over ears in love with Ellaline.

He let himself drift along the tide of his love without thinking of possible consequences. He loved Ellaline. He was pretty certain that his love was returned, that was sufficient for him at the present.

No thought of what his proud father, the old Squire of Crewsdon Hall, might say ever troubled him in these halcyon days, when he wandered about the shore unrebuked, with Ellaline by his side in all the rapture and happiness of love's young dream.

He forgot the proud traditions of his race—forgot that the object of his passion was practically nameless as well as penniless—forgot that his father would probably demand his

wife's lineage and parentage, as never before in the history of the race had the head of the House of Crewsdon been known to marry anyone whose pedigree could not be traced back through several generations, and upon whose escutcheon no blot could be found.

Who could tell Ellaline's parentage?

No one, for no trace had ever been discovered of anyone belonging to her.

True, the clothes in which she had been enveloped pointed to her being the child of wealthy parents, and her own beauty was decidedly of an aristocratic type; but then neither of these facts could guarantee that she was not really nameless, that lovely as she was she might not have been born in wedlock, but be the offspring of shame.

On the other hand, this young girl, this solitary waif of the sea, might have been the only descendant of a proud and ancient name, the heiress to broad lands and great wealth, who ought to have quenched it by reason of her position and her loveliness in that great world where outward rank and riches are thought more of than inward worth and goodness.

## CHAPTER V.

Those were happy days for the young lovers—spent in each other's companionship without a shadow to darken their enjoyment, or hint of unhappiness in the future.

Though Ellaline was not versed in the ways of society, with its hollow shams, and its taking very often the pinchbeck for the real article, she had a strange charm of her own.

To her young mind all nature was glorious, and she sometimes surprised Dudley by the knowledge she showed about many things which he had never thought about.

She knew the different cries of the sea-birds; the shriek and mournful whistle of the curlew, the cackle of the gulls, the "peewit" of the plover, and the scream of the redshank, were all familiar to her. She could tell the different sorts of gulls, black-backed, grey, common, or black-headed, which used to come with the hooded crows, especially to the mouths of rivers that flowed into the sea, when the tide was out.

Much of this lore Ellaline had learned from Luke, who was never tired of taking the girl about, showing her the haunts of the wild-fowl, and the recesses in the rocks or the holes in the shingle where some of them laid their eggs.

He, too, it was who had rowed her out to the Turk's Head Caverns, and shown her the place where she had been found, for Ellaline was not kept in ignorance of the circumstances of her being washed up on that stormy night when the strange vessel had been wrecked, and burned on Deadman's Rock.

Yet all Luke's patient care and love never had succeeded in raising in Ellaline other sentiments than those of gratitude, and a sort of filial affection.

Never had her heart beaten any the faster from his proximity. Never had her eyes drooped beneath the glance of his. Never had any word of his power to stir her feelings or cause a flush to rise to her soft cheek.

She had never even dreamed that he could look upon her in any other light than that of a daughter, and she was perfectly unconscious of the suffering she had it in her power to inflict upon the honest, good-hearted, if somewhat rough, protector of her youth. Luke Polwhil himself had scarcely put into form the secret hopes he had been so long cherishing.

There was no need to startle his darling out of her unconscious serenity. She was still little more than a child, there would be time enough when she was two or three years older.

Sometimes in his humility he would think he was not worthy of this beautiful flower which was blooming in his humble home; but yet there was no one about whom she would care to marry, and he never contemplated the possibility of Dudley Crewsdon's wishing to pluck and wear this Sea-Rose, this one treasure of his which he had guarded so carefully.

He knew the Crewsdons to be a very old and very proud family. He thought a member of it would never condescend to wed an unknown, nameless girl, however beautiful and graceful she might be, and therefore he was not seriously anxious when the two young people spent those summer days in happy companionship.

It was a terrible shock to him one day when, on returning from an expedition to the neighbouring market-town, he came suddenly upon a sight that almost took his breath away, and made him, strong man as he was, feel faint with sudden terrible fear.

Yet to an ordinary observer the sight would have been a pretty and romantic one.

Only a girl with her golden head resting contentedly on her lover's shoulder, while he clasped her tenderly and lovingly close to him, and bending down laid his lips to hers in a long lingering kiss, such a kiss as would only pass between affianced lovers who were all in all to each other, and who had forgotten the outside world in the contemplation of their own enraptured bliss.

The young lovers, for anyone could see that was the relation in which these two stood to each other, were Dudley and Ellaline.

But had Luke seen the fabled Gorgon he could not have stood more rigidly, more as though he were indeed turned to stone.

Was this frightful thing true? His one treasure, the little ewe lamb that he had guarded so faithfully and lovingly, was she to be torn from him?

Was there no one among the grand ladies that Dudley Crewsdon must know that he could have chosen, and left this sweet sea-pink to bloom in her obscurity for those who loved her so well; by which Luke meant himself.

Why, why had he never spoken, never tried to gain her affection? Too well now did he recognise that it was too late. She loved, and it was this young and handsome man, who was already endowed with so many of this world's goods. Why should one have all, and another have taken from him the only precious possession that he had?

Polwhil groaned in the agony of his spirit, as so many have done before; as, alas! so many will till this earth comes to an end.

"Fool, fool!" he muttered. "I mout a- known she were never meant for the likes o' me! What be I that I should a-hoped she mout wan day a-learned ter saay, Luke, I loves ye, I will be yer bride; but now—" and the strong man hid his face in his hands, while his chest heaved with convulsive sobs.

In that hour of agony Ben's words, spoken sixteen years before, flashed across him.

"Beware o' one yo has rescued frae the say, she's boun' t' waark ye harm."

He would have laid down his life for her willingly, but to yield her to another, to let her go away beyond his ken, this was bitter indeed.

Then suddenly a thought came to him, and he clenched his fist, and the dark blood mounted to his brow.

"Ef I thowt that he meant her any haarm I wud kill him where he stands!" he muttered, with almost Cain-like ferocity in his glance, as he saw the caresses Dudley was bestowing upon his fair companion, totally unconscious that he was being watched by a pair of miserable, jealous eyes. "Ef 'e 'ad never coom saack she wud a bin mine, content to live wi' Ben and me. I wish 'e'd never seen 'er, that 'e'd 'ad nothink to do wi' 'er bein' taught all they foine things. A fisherman's woiife 'as no need o' book-larnin'; but now—but now—" and he wrung his hands bitterly. "Oh! I wish I were ded, fur then I couldna feel."

Meanwhile, the lovers, unconscious of the storm of grief and unhappiness they had unwittingly raised in Luke Polwhil's breast, were sauntering slowly away, weaving roseate visions for the future, when they would be always together, not thinking of the obstacles there might be in their path to prevent the course of their true love running smooth.

Luke, to whom the sight of the lovers' evi-

dent happiness was little less than torture, now that his eyes were opened, soon made some excuse to go out after the evening meal, which he had scarcely touched. He could not bear to look on the face which he loved with all the force of his untutored nature. He must school himself to the inevitable, but he could not remain under the same roof with the man who had supplanted him.

Up and down the small beach he paced, wrestling with this fierce pain that assailed him, all the more unbearable because he had never even imagined its possibility.

How long Luke had been there alone he did not know; but presently he was aroused by a footstep on the shingle, and the man who was in his thoughts came forward, the scent of his cigar mingling with the soft seabreezes.

Dudley did not see Luke, and would have passed on unheeding, only with a sudden impulse Polwhil emerged from the rock against which he had been leaning and stood in the other's path.

"Luke, old fellow, how you startled me," Crewsdon said.

"I waan, a word or two wi you, Maister Crewsdon," said Luke, in a curiously husky voice.

"Certainly," returned the other, somewhat surprised at the request. "If there is anything I can do for you—"

"Ye can tell me this. D'ye mean t'act fair an' square as a gentleman should?" Luke broke out, unable to contain the fire slumbering within him.

"I do not understand you," Dudley said, haughtily, all his pride up in arms at being thus addressed by an inferior.

"I—seen—ye—to-day—by—the—ruined mill," Polwhil returned, accenting each word.

"If you did, what then?"

"Why, this, Maister Crewsdon. Be you agoin t' maake Ellaline"—there was a quiver in his voice as he spoke the name—"yer wedded woiife?"

"What right have you to question me?"

"What right?" Luke began furiously, then checking himself he went on more calmly. "Arter what I seen this day I knows she luv'es ye, an' I spose ye luv'es 'er; but I tells 'e, Maister Crewsdon, rather than you suld maake her your loight-a-luve, I'd lay ye ded at my feet, tho my loife suld pay the forfeit!"

It would be hard to describe Dudley's feelings at this address. Anger struggled with admiration at the man's rugged honesty of purpose, and finally this feeling conquered when he remembered that it was in the defence of the woman he loved that Polwhil spoke.

"Luke," he said, after a moment's consideration, "I might knock you down for your doubt of my honour; but I know it is your anxiety for Ellaline's welfare that prompts you to speak as you have done; and, besides, as you almost stand in the place of a father to her"—here Luke winced—"I owe it to you that you should know one of the first that this day she promised to be my wife."

"Your—woiife?"

"My loved and honoured wife. Why, man, you must know little of the honour of a Crewsdon if you could think—bah! I cannot talk of it."

"I beg your paardon," said Luke, almost humbly. "Youm allus been a gentleman, but I'd heerd 'ould Squire were very proud, and I thowt he wud scarcely loike a wuman wi'out a name fur his aunly sun's woiife. I thowt mout be youm only amusin' yerself, but that would be deth t' er."

A cold chill seemed to come over Dudley as Luke spoke. What if his haughty father should refuse to receive a nameless bride? But even in that case he would not give up Ellaline. If he had to choose between them he would rather leave Crewsdon Hall than renounce and break the heart of his innocent love.

"Luke," he said, earnestly, "come what will, Ellaline shall be my bride. If my father consents, I know my mother loves me too well to in any way assist in making me unhappy. If he agrees, with what pride I shall take my wife to the old Hall, where so many fair women have reigned in turn as its mistress, though not one of them could compare with my Ellaline. If he does not—"

"Whaat then,"—there was a suppressed eagerness in Luke's voice that he strove in vain to conceal—"if he refuses?"

"I shall marry her without his consent. I have a small fortune of my own, enough to keep my darling, though not in the style she deserves; but I will work for her, so that want shall never come near her. Oh! Polwhil, you do not know what true love is when you think it could be influenced by obstacles such as those you hint at. She loves me, I love her. No power in this wide world could keep us apart."

This answer ought to have satisfied Luke, but, somehow, it did not. Each of Dudley's words seemed to drop like ice upon his heart, quenching for ever the slight hope which had sprung up that young Crewsdon would be so far influenced by his father's opposition that he would give up Ellaline, at all events while the Squire lived—but now!

He turned away with a heavy sigh.

Not know what love was? Too well did he know it, and what misery a hopeless passion could bring to an untutored heart, what mad jealousy and tearing pain it could cause.

Oh! if he could only die and end it all, or, better still—a thought, murderous and black, suddenly assailing him with a terrible temptation—remove his rival from his path. How easy it would be! He knew Dudley intended leaving Pengarth on the morrow to make final arrangements, and ascertain his father's attitude on the subject of his marriage with Ellaline, for, though Crewsdon had not said so in so many words, now that Luke knew that he had been accepted from his own lips he understood very well his hurry to have all things settled, and the suspense over.

He, Polwhil, might offer to row him over to the nearest point where he could catch a train, there being no station within seven or eight miles of Pengarth, and it being much shorter to go by water than overland, and then—why then, how easy it would be! Dudley would have little chance against Luke's much more powerful frame. Maddened by hopeless love and jealousy, he could choke the life out of him with his sinewy fingers, and—Polwhil had not lived all those years on that wild coast without finding out some of its secrets.

He knew there were several places, fissures in the caverns, deep pools in the silent caves where anything deposited would never again see the light of day, never be found by the most curious. Dudley Crewsdon would be missing, no clue to be found to his fate 'til the last trumpet at the Day of Judgment should sound, and the dead be called from their graves, hallowed and unhallowed.

There was a horrible fascination in the thought. It haunted Luke Polwhil all that night as he paced to and fro like a caged wild animal, under the dark blue, star-spangled vault of Heaven.

It followed him to the cottage when, some hours after the dawn had broken, he returned there to settle his disordered hair, and bathe his blood-shot eyes in clear cold water.

It would never do to let anyone suspect there was anything amiss with him, because, afterwards, when the hue-and-cry was raised, it might be remembered against him.

It was still with him when Dudley, who had come down early to have a last stroll with his betrothed in the fresh sweetness of the morning air, gratefully accepted his offer to row him across, and thus save him a long tramp, and he went to busy himself about the boat, not seeming to notice, and yet being



keenly conscious of every caress bestowed by his rival upon the girl he himself so madly loved.

It was there floating through his mind in all its ghastly horror when, the last adieu said, and Dudley having reluctantly torn himself away from Ellaline, who would have accompanied her lover to the station save for the fact that old Ben, who was over ninety, and growing very feeble, was not at all well, and she did not like to leave the old man alone ill during Luke's absence, he shoved off the boat, and saw that radiant figure and beautiful face with the eyes gazing so wistfully, not at him, but at his rival in the stern.

It was with him, crowding out every other thought or feeling, as with powerful strokes he impelled the boat through the turbulent water that always surrounded Deadman's Rock, not caring or noticing whither he was sending her, till a bump, a shock, a startled exclamation from Dudley, and they were both thrown into the water that seethed and hissed round that fatal spot, struggling for their lives amid the hungry waves, that threatened every moment to engulf them, and cast their battered bodies on to the cruel, jagged points of the rock.

In a moment, swept away as it were by that involuntary immersion in the cold waters, fled that frightful murderous thought that had haunted Luke Polwhil for so many terrible hours. Now that there was a chance of Dudley being put out of his way by accident and not by design, he seemed to feel how Ellaline would suffer when only her lover's dead body would be given up by the treacherous sea, given up lacerated, bruised, with the breath of life gone for ever from the pale lips that could never again respond to her passionate appeals for only one word to tell that he loved her still.

No, rather than she should suffer even one tithe of what he himself had felt of the pangs of hopeless love, he, Luke, would endure in silence what must always be to him a dreary, lonely life, unsolaced by the sweet companionship of wife or child. Dudley Crewsdon must be saved to keep the shadow of sorrow away from the child he himself had loved from the first moment he had seen her in her floating prison. As these thoughts flashed across him with the rapidity of lightning, Luke, always a powerful swimmer and accustomed to the currents that surged around Deadman's Rock, made his way, not without difficulty, to where he could see his rival battling for dear life against the waters that were rapidly getting the mastery of him, for, though a fair swimmer, Dudley was not accustomed, like Luke, to the currents, and did not know how to strike slantwise across them so as to lessen their power.

"Hook! on, Maister Crewsdon, I got ye," Luke shouted, clutching at Dudley just as he was sinking, "ye do as I tells ye an' we'll soon make the boat, she'll go round in these currents, an'—"

"Polwhil, whaat in the devil's name were ye after?" at this juncture shouted a rough voice, and to the intense satisfaction of the half-drowned men a boat containing a sailor rowed rapidly to the spot, and, after considerable trouble, hauled them both in.

"I thout ye were mad," he continued, "when I see ye shaave the rock so near, an' I coomed doon at once. Whaat made ye do it, had?"

Luke muttered some almost unintelligible reply about not looking or thinking where he was going, and then turned his attention to the task of regaining his own boat, which he had rightly stated had been going round in a circle.

"I'm thinkin', sir," he said to Dudley, "ye'd loike to go back to the cottage an' get yer clothes dried."

But as Dudley found that his valise was intact, he preferred going on to an hotel, where he could make a change, rather than alarm the inmates of the cottage by appearing in that drenched condition.

"Luke," he said, grasping Polwhil's hand when they had gained the shore, "I owe my life to you; but for you by this time I should have been a drowned corpse. I shall never forget the debt I owe ye."

Luke drew his hand away almost roughly. "Doan't," he said, in a hoarse voice. "If yer knew all ye wedn't taake my haand. I aint fit thaat any good man sould touch me."

"Nonsense, man!" Dudley cried, cheerily—he thought that Luke was a little upset by their late adventure, and was blaming himself for his carelessness. "It was an accident—you could not help it. I am proud to call so brave a man my friend. I cannot thank you sufficiently, but Ellaline shall, for the life you have saved for her!"

"Aye, fur her—'twas fur her saake I dun it," Luke murmured, a softened look overspreading his sunburnt face. "Praps I sull be forgiven for thaat. I could not make her unhappy now arter strivin' all these years t'other way; but oh, Maister Dudley!" falling into the old, familiar style, "ye'll be gud to her. Ye'll never make her regret that she has chosen ye?"

"I promise, Luke," Dudley said, solemnly, awed by something in the man's manner, "if I am spared to wed Ellaline, never, while it is in my power, will I do anything to cause her pain, or to make you regret that you this day risked your life to save mine!"

And, in spite of Luke's opposition, he once more cordially wrung his hand ere he turned away.

Polwhil looked after him, and a sigh rose to his lips.

"He is worthy of even my darling," was all he said, as he, too, turned away, with a dull pain still at his heart, but with the Cain-like feeling gone for ever.

## CHAPTER VI.

Lady Alicia was delighted to have her handsome son back at Crewsdon Hall sooner than she expected; but she looked very grave when he informed her of the object of his coming.

"Mother mine!" he said, seeing the cloud upon her brow, and bending his tall head, he kissed her still fair face. "You surely will not look with eyes of disfavour upon the daughter I propose to give you? Where will you find a sweeter bride than my Ellaline?"

"She is very beautiful!" his mother answered; "and, I believe, as good as she is lovely. A woman, certainly, that any man might be proud to win under other conditions; but—have you considered, Dudley?"

"Have I considered what, mother?"

"Your father. I fear he will never consent to your wedding Ellaline."

"Then, mother, I must marry her without," he said, calmly.

"My boy, I fear trouble is in store for you," his mother returned. "You know your father's pride, and his prejudices against a Crewsdon marrying anyone beneath him in rank."

"How can we tell that Ellaline is below us in birth? She may be a stray princess. Mother, I love her with the one strong, undying passion of my manhood! I will never give her up, cost what it may!"

Lady Alicia sighed.

She recognised some of the old Squire's dogged obstinacy in her son, and she feared for the result when these two strong wills should come into collision.

Dudley continued,—

"At least, mother, let me have the satisfaction of knowing that you do not disapprove my choice."

"My boy!" she said, very tenderly, laying her hand upon his head as he knelt beside her chair, "if it depended upon me your happiness would be secure. Of what weight in the scale are rank and wealth against true worth and a pure, disinterested affection? Ella, whatever her birth may be, is one of Nature's

gentlewomen, and would adorn any station. But can we make your father think so?"

"I shall try, mother. If I fail it will yet be a consolation to me to know that your blessing will be given to us, and that your prayers will follow us into our exile, for no power on earth shall prevent me from making the woman I love my wife!"

Lady Alicia's fears were but too well-founded.

The Squire flew into a towering rage when he comprehended the purport of Dudley's revelation to him.

His fury was so great that he heaped unmeasured terms of reproach upon his son's head and upon that of the designing creature who had ensnared him simply for the purpose of gaining wealth and station.

Dudley listened silently, so long as the abuse was confined to himself; but when undeserved contumely was showered upon his pure, guiltless darling, his enforced calm broke, and, turning upon his father, a terrible scene ensued between them, which ended by Dudley declaring that he would leave Crewsdon Hall that very hour, and would never enter it again until his father confessed that he had been mistaken, and apologised for the wrong he had inflicted upon one so fair and sweet as the girl he had so bitterly maligned.

The old Squire smiled grimly to himself as he was thus left master of the field.

Dudley would soon come to his senses when the supplies were stopped, and he was thrown back upon the slender fortune he had inherited from an aunt.

He knew how fond Lady Alicia was of her son, and how eagerly she had been looking forward to his return from India, and here he had driven him from her side in his wild burst of anger. He had never thought of her and her delicate health in his mad rage. What if she were to pine herself ill on Dudley's account?

To do the Squire justice he was greatly attached to his wife, and would not willingly have pained her, but in his anger against his son he had never thought of what the consequences might be to her in depriving her of the companionship of her only child.

But he would not own, even to himself, that he had been in the wrong, only he was doubly attentive to his wife, and tried by every means in his power to distract her thoughts from her banished son.

He was scarcely successful in his efforts. Lady Alicia was very quiet, never railing at or reproaching him openly for his harshness to his disobedient heir, but there was a look in her eyes which was harder for him to meet than any amount of verbal reproach would have been for him to bear, and he fancied he could see her getting paler day by day, fading away, as it were, before his very eyes.

Meanwhile Dudley had returned to Pengarth in a not very joyous state of mind. He rather shrank from telling Ellaline the true state of the case. The girl was very guileless, and innocent, and in that remote village had never heard a word of scorn because she was a foundling. She had no idea that she would be looked down upon by the haughty Squire of Crewsdon. Lady Alicia had been so kind and gentle to her on her rare visits to Pengarth that she had been delighted at the thought of living in the same house with so fair and gracious a mother-in-law. How could he tell her that now he could not take her to Crewsdon Hall as his bride, that instead of being the wife of a rich man he could only make her the wife of a struggling one?

Yet it must be done, and he would leave it to her to say whether she would still become his, now that he was poor, or—but he could not follow that train of thought. What would life be to him without Ellaline's love and companionship? A dreary waste, a wretched existence, which the sooner it was ended the better it would be for him.

But he need not have feared. Ellaline loved him for himself alone, not for what he had.

She did not fear poverty, she had never been accustomed to the luxuries of life. The only things that grieved her were that she would not be able to see his mother and give her the affection of a daughter, and that his love for her should estrange him from his father and deprive him of the companionship of his loved mother.

"What harm I have done you," she said, half sorrowfully, when at last he had disclosed the facts to her. "It would have been better for you had we never met. How you must regret."

"I regret the estrangement, darling, certainly, but if I live to be a hundred I should never regret having met you. I wish I could put you in the position that ought rightfully to be yours when you become my bride; but, Ellaline, you will have to be content with a very modest establishment indeed, instead of being mistress of a grand old mansion."

"I should not care what sort of a home it is if only you are there, Dudley," she said, softly. "In fact, I think I should be happier in a tiny cottage than amid all the splendour of Crewdson Hall, for you would seem to be all mine then, and, do you know—"

"Well, Ellaline?"

"I have sometimes felt a tiny bit afraid of meeting your father."

"There is no need any longer for your fear, my darling. Henceforth the paths trodden by my father and myself will lie far apart," Dudley said, with a slight laugh that was not altogether mirthful.

"But your mother, Dudley? It will be terrible for you never to see her again. Would it not be better to give me up?" in a hesitating voice.

"I will never give you up," he returned, calmly; "and, dear, my mother knows and approves of my determination. I may not see her, but I shall certainly take some means of communicating with her and letting her know that all is well with us. Ellaline," suddenly changing his tone, "how soon can you be ready to come with me, to give yourself into my keeping for aye?"

Ellaline was no society young lady to hang back and blush and stammer at this direct question. She raised her lovely eyes, full of trust and faith in her lover, to his as she said, simply, yet earnestly,—

"I am yours, Dudley. I will marry you when and where you please."

He gathered her to him and kissed her fondly.

"I shall claim that promise on my return," he said.

"Are you going away again? You have only just come," she exclaimed in a disappointed tone.

"Yes, dear," he returned, gravely. "I must go up to London to-morrow and consult my solicitors about the small fortune I inherit from a relative. I have never troubled to inquire into it before, but now that it is all I can endow you with I must needs see to it. But, Ellaline, to-night is ours; let us enjoy it as though there were no cares or troubles in store for us. Let us paint the future as we would fain have it—a pathway strewn with roses, and never a thorn to mar its sweetness, and forget that such things as evil passions and sundered lives can exist."

In spite of their impending separation on the morrow, and the knowledge of all Dudley's faith had cost him, neither of the lovers ever forgot that evening spent together, with the silvery moon throwing her radiance over everything, and lighting up rock and boulder, glittering sand and murmuring sea with a fairy brilliance inexpressibly beautiful.

The next day Dudley left, but before he went he had a short conversation with Luke Polwhil, who had changed from a bluff, hearty, good-natured, if somewhat superstitious, person, into a silent, taciturn man.

Some of the sailors declared he was bewitched, that he must have come across the water witch, who was supposed to haunt one of the caverns, and once in every ten years was

permitted to cast her spells over any unlucky individual who should venture into her domain.

But old Ben only smiled knowingly when these remarks were made to him. He did not say so openly, for he had grown fond of the beautiful maiden who nursed him so tenderly when he was ill, and seemed to shed sunshine over his declining years; but he was positively certain that it was Ellaline who had bewitched the strong man, and he was not far wrong. It was she who had changed the whole current of Luke Polwhil's life, and taken from him, all unwittingly, the negative happiness that had once been his, and left in its place a never-ending pain.

"The laas couldna help it, she were boun' ter do it," the old man thought, but never, to his honour be it said, did he give the slightest hint to Ellaline that such was his belief, and the girl never dreamed that her kind protector ever looked upon her in any other light than that of a daughter.

Dudley's communication to Polwhil was but brief. He told him that his supposition had been correct, and that the Squire utterly refused to receive Ellaline as his daughter-in-law, that this had not changed his own determination to marry her, and that he should return as soon as he had settled the business which took him away and demand her from her guardian's hands. Meanwhile, he begged Luke to guard and watch over his treasure in his absence.

This Polwhil promised faithfully to do. It was part of the penance he had set himself for the murderous designs he had once, in a moment of frenzy, entertained against his unsuspecting rival, that he would do everything to further that rival's happiness in helping to unite him to the woman he himself so fervently, yet hopelessly, loved.

He recognised now how unsuitable a union between himself and Ellaline would have been, though his love was strong as death, and had well-nigh proved as cruel as the grave. But there was yet time, and he would atone for his sin.

Dudley was detained much longer than he expected, but he wrote loving letters to Ellaline—letters which she treasured fondly, and every word of which she knew by heart.

A few days after Dudley Crewdson had gone to London Luke announced to old Ben, who had somewhat recovered his health, though he was too feeble to do any work, that he should be absent from Pengarth for a few days.

The old man said nothing, but chuckled to himself knowingly. "Oh! it was plain, the laad"—Luke was over forty—"the laad were bewitched, he were goin' ter spend 'is earnin's on a gran' weddin' present for the laas. Waal, it did not matter; he, Ben, was near the end o' 'is days, an' if the laad chose ter spend 'is savin's on the bit laas, 'e would not prevent 'im!"

But for, once old Ben's sagacity was at fault.

Luke was not going to buy a wedding-present. His destination was Crewdson Hall.

With him went a parcel very carefully done up.

When he arrived he boldly asked to see the Squire.

The gorgeous, powdered footman eyed this strange arrival in doubt.

"The Squire were at home," he acknowledged, in answer to Polwhil's demand; "but the fact were, her ladyship were very ill, and he didn't think the master would see anyone, he were that distracted."

"Her ladyship ill! All the more reason I suld see 'im at onc," Luke cried, eagerly. "Tell 'im that someone frae Pengarth wants ter speak t' 'im. Hurry, maan, I tell ye it may be a matter o' life an' deth!"

Thus adjured, the gorgeous footman condescended to take the message, and was rather surprised when he received orders to admit the man to the Squire's study at once.

Squire Crewdson was already regretting that he had sent Dudley away so summarily.

It was the cause of his wife's relapse into illness, and he could not bear to see her wistful eyes, or hear her call out in her sleep for the beloved son whom he had banished.

He was half-inclined to send for Dudley, so that his presence might soothe and solace his mother back to health.

But the Crewdson pride forbade; he could not be the first to take the initiative at reconciliation.

But here was a way out of the difficulty without lowering his pride, for, of course, this messenger from Pengarth must come from his son; and he was ready to receive Dudley back on the same footing, provided, of course, that he would give up the nameless girl he had intended making his bride.

The Squire would not have been so ready to meet any advances from his son had it not been for his wife's condition.

Lady Alicia was very ill, and he feared that were it to go on it might take a fatal turn.

He knew the best, in fact, the only medicine for her would be her son's presence, and that was why he told the footman to admit Luke Polwhil.

The latter looked round in surprise at the grandeur of the house and its appointments, the marble staircase, the beautiful statues, the velvet pile carpets into which the feet sank, the massive furniture and magnificent pictures made a deep impression on him, accustomed as he was to the pinched space and homely accommodation of the cottage at Pengarth.

"He gives aul this oop fur her!" he muttered. "He mun love her aulmost as much as I does, but—"

Here his reverie was interrupted by the entrance of the Squire.

"You come from Pengarth. I presume you have a message for me from my son?" he said, in coldly polite tones.

Luke Polwhil eyed him steadily.

So this was the terrible Squire Crewdson of whom he had heard. He did not look so very formidable.

"I be coom frae Pengarth," he returned, slowly; "right enuff; but Maister Dudley did not send me."

"Then may I ask to what I owe the honour of this visit?" the Squire said, in his stiffest manner.

"I dunno 'bout the honour, but I coom 'ere ter 'ave a plain talk w'ee."

"Will you have the goodness to explain?"

"Ees. Ye've made oop yer mind not to let Maister Dudley marry the laas a' 'is choice?"

"Sir," said the Squire, haughtily, "my private affairs can be no business of yours. You say you do not come from my son. Permit me to wish you good-day."

"Hoold haard, Squire; I coom a long distance ter see ye; ye're not agoin' w'out listenen ter whaat I hev ter say."

Squire Crewdson paused with his hand upon the door.

After all, perhaps it would be better to hear what the fellow had to say. "Go on," he said, curtly, "but be brief; my wife is unwell, and I must return to her shortly."

"Aye, happen she misses her son. Ye needn't froom. I could see how she loved 'im wen she were at Pengarth; but whaat I wants ter say t' you 'es this. That bit laas who," he stopped suddenly. A mist seemed to come before his eyes. His Ellaline, his wail from the sea, alas! his no longer, it was for her sake that he had taken this journey—

"Well, sir," the Squire cried, impatiently.

"Wait a minute. See here, Squire," and rapidly unrolling the parcel he had brought with him, Luke displayed the tiny clothes, and the pearl-embroidered shawl in which Ellaline had been wrapped when found.

"I see, returned the Squire, icily, "but, my



good man; it was useless your bringing those things here for me to purchase, they are not of the least use to me."

"I did not bring them here to sell," said Luke, quietly. "Nay," as the Squire made a movement as if to leave him, "just hear me for a few moments. See, are they not fine? Wal, these belong to your son's promised wife. They show she does not belong to the common people, but to quality like your son?"

"Mr.—Mr.—Ah! Polwhil, thank you," in his blindest tones. "Really, I take not the slightest interest in those things you have been good enough to bring all this distance. I cannot stay any longer, allow me to wish you good morning."

And that was all the result of poor Luke's heroic attempt to further the welfare of his rival and the girl he loved so truly.

It was with a heavy heart that he returned to Pengarth with the articles he had treasured for so many years. His journey had been useless, and he could not make atonement for the sin he had contemplated. But though Luke did not know it, it was not altogether in vain that he had had that interview with Squire Crewdson. It is probable that the latter would have thought no more about it, had it not been for the terrible decline in his wife's health. She became delirious, and in her delirium was constantly calling upon her son.

The doctors assured the half-distracted husband that the only thing to save her life was the presence of her son.

But how was this to be accomplished? He did not know where Dudley was, and even if he should succeed in finding him would he return to Crewdson Hall after he had been driven from it. Ah! Yes, his heart told him that nothing would keep Dudley from his mother's side if he knew her life depended on his presence. But if he sued to Dudley he must make some concessions himself.

What was that the Cornishman had said some days before when he was there. The girl might be of gentle birth after all, and, well, as he looked at his wife's drawn, pinched features, and listened to her incessant cries for Dudley, her life was of the most importance to him. If Alicia were taken from him he should soon follow, and then there would be no obstacle to Dudley's marrying Ellaline.

He would go himself to Pengarth, he supposed his son would be there. He could do nothing here, his wife was in competent hands, and seemed more restless and ill at ease in his presence. He stooped over and kissed the feverish brow.

"My darling wife, I go to bring Dudley to you," he said, looking wistfully for some sign of recognition in her eyes, but she only moaned, "Dudley, Dudley, where is he? Why does he not come before it is too late?" and reproaching himself bitterly, the Squire hurried away.

On the beach at Pengarth, seated near her favourite spot, was Ellaline. Very fair she looked in the brilliant sunshine, fair and sweet enough to excuse almost any folly on the part of a man to win her, and so thought even the haughty Squire of Crewdson as he gazed upon her, himself unseen.

Surely the man Polwhil was right, and that delicate loveliness must be descended from a long line of ancestors. He had been to the cottage first, and had been told there that Dudley was still away, and that Ellaline was on the seashore alone.

Refusing Polwhil's offer to take him to her, he found his way from the directions Luke gave him, and was obliged to own that in appearance at least Ellaline was worthy to be the wife of even the head of the house of Crewdson.

He hesitated as to how he should address her. This girl with her patrician beauty and delicate grace was a very different sort of person from the rustic country maiden he had expected to see.

For a moment or so he hesitated, then the

remembrance of his wife urged him to action. Raising his hat and bowing with as courtly a grace as though he had been addressing a duchess, he said, "Pardon me, but I think you must be the young lady of whom I am in search. Is your name Ellaline?"

At the first sound of a voice the girl started to her feet, a glad smile overspreading her fair face; for a moment she thought it was Dudley's voice, then as she saw a stranger the light died out of her eyes, and the soft flush faded from her cheeks.

"Yes, I am Ellaline," she answered simply, at the same time wondering who this stranger who knew her name could be.

"Then will you tell me where I may write to or see my son Dudley? His—his mother is very ill, and I would take him to her ere it is too late."

"You are Dudley's father?" Ellaline exclaimed, too astonished to say anything else.

"Yes, child, for my wife's sake be merciful. She always loved you. I—I have wronged you, but you will not keep a son from his dying mother's side," the Squire said, brokenly. He had been humbled indeed when he could thus plead to the nameless girl he had once sworn should never, with his consent, become his son's wife.

"Lady Alicia dying? Oh! it cannot be!" Ellaline cried, sorrowfully, as the tears started to her eyes. "She was so good, so kind, to me."

"She was an angel, if ever there were one on earth. Child, you will help me to save her?"

"I will do anything you wish," Ellaline said, gently.

"You—you will, after what I have said against you? Give me my son's address. Stay, though, Ellaline—you will let me call you so?—you write to him at once and bid him come to meet you at Crewdson Hall."

"At Crewdson Hall?" she echoed bewildered.

"Yes, child; bid him not tarry, for his mother's sake. You will not refuse to come with me?" pleadingly, as he saw her hesitation. "It is for my darling's sake; you will see her daughter now."

This was Dudley's father who spoke. Ellaline did not long resist his pleading. After writing the letter her preparations did not take long, and she was soon on her way to the Crewdsons' ancestral home with the haughty old man, whose pride had been so humbled by affliction.

She would not leave without asking Luke's advice upon the matter. Polwhil, though he knew that now indeed he would be separated from her for ever, bravely concealed his pain, and it was owing to his counsels that she went with her prospective father-in-law. What he had failed to do Lady Alicia's dangerous illness had effected. Ellaline and Dudley would be happy now, while he—a sob rose in his throat, which he resolutely choked down—he would not mar the brightness of her future by showing one trace of the agony he felt at the thought of the joyless years that stretched before him. He was only a rough fisherman, but he was of the stuff of which martyrs are made.

He did indeed shrink back when Ellaline, after having kissed old Ben, who was in his second childhood, threw her arms round his brawny neck and kissed him repeatedly, calling him the best of fathers and telling him that he must give her away at her wedding.

Each of those kisses, so innocently given, seemed to burn his rugged cheek as though it had been branded with a red-hot iron, and it was almost a relief to him when the train bore them away, and he could indulge his grief alone. Henceforth there was nothing in the world for him to live for.

Ben's superstitious prophecy had come true. The child he had saved long years before had worked him the worst harm which woman can work man, and she had done it all unwittingly. To the hour of her death Ellaline would never know of the consuming passion

Luke's heart bore for her—his wail from the sea.

Dudley's astonishment may be better imagined than described when he received Ellaline's letter bidding him meet her at Crewdson Hall, where his mother lay dangerously ill; but he lost no time in obeying the summons.

The Squire met him at the door, and by the cordial clasp of his hand Dudley knew they were reconciled.

"How is she?" were his first words.

"A shade better," was his father's answer.

"And Ellaline?"

"Is with her mother." How Dudley's heart rejoiced at those words. It assured him the Squire would no longer oppose his marriage.

"Do you know, my boy," the old man continued, "that your mother began to improve from the time I brought Ellaline here, now three days ago? She is conscious, and I believe your presence will do more to restore her than all the doctor's medicine."

No word of pardon passed between the two men, but they understood one another, and Dudley knew that he would never hear again anything from his father on the score of his wife's unknown birth.

Nor did he. The Squire, who, from the extreme fineness of the clothes in which she was found, was almost as assured of her gentle birth as Polwhil himself, set on foot many inquiries to ascertain, if possible, her parentage, but without avail; nothing was ever discovered. If she had been a sea-nymph's daughter, escaped from a palace of pearl and coral under the ocean, there could not have been less trace found as to who she was or where she came from; but none the less was her father-in-law proud of the sensation she created when, on her marriage, she was presented at Court by the still beautiful Lady Alicia.

For the Squire had been right. Dudley's presence seemed to have a magical effect upon his mother. She slowly but surely regained her health and spirits, tended as she was by Ellaline's loving care, and the proud master of Crewdson could not but acknowledge to himself that his prospective daughter-in-law excelled in all gentle, feminine attributes.

At last came the day when Dudley and Ellaline were united by the Reverend Mark Fenton in the private chapel attached to Crewdson Hall.

Many fair brides had been seen from time to time in that ancient chapel, but never a fairer one did the sun, glinting through the stained-glass windows, shine upon than the one who breathed so softly the vows that gave her into Dudley's keeping for life.

In spite of Ellaline's wish, Luke Polwhil was not present at her marriage. Though she and Dudley had gone down to Pengarth specially to ask him, they could not alter his determination.

"Na, na!" he said, shaking his head. "I suld only be oot o' place mang y're fine frens. I don't want ter disgrace yer."

"What nonsense, dear old Luke! As if you could disgrace anyone. You will come? I will take no denial from you who have been my best friend," but he was proof against her coaxing. She should not be jeered at on account of her humble friends.

Secretly, Squire Crewdson was delighted when he learned the failure of their mission.

Polwhil was a very good fellow in his place, but he would rather not see him among the guests at his son's wedding.

As part of her bridal robe Ellaline wore that beautiful shawl in which she had been enveloped when found.

Time had not yellowed the silky fabric, nor tarnished the lustre of the pearls which had been embroidered into it.

The Court dressmaker who received the order for her trousseau went into raptures over the lovely material.

(Concluded on page 376.)

# ROYAL'S PROMISE

By FLORENCE HODGKINSON.

Author of "Iry's Peril," "Guy Forrester's Secret," "Kenneth's Choice," etc., etc.

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Sir Reginald Charteris lay dying, and anxiously awaits the arrival of his heir, Royal Charteris. Royal arrives in the nick of time, and the last words of his father exact a promise from him that the secret he then confides to him shall not be revealed without the consent of the person concerned.

Nell Fortescue is left an orphan at the early age of ten, and is adopted by her grandfather, Lord Delamere. Unhappily, his lordship lived but a short time to watch over his grandchild. In his will he left her an ample fortune when she should come of age, with an allowance for her use in the meantime. Little Nell is left in charge of Mrs. Delamere, and not realising her fortunate position, and not being over kindly treated, she determines to fit herself to earn her own living, and for this purpose enters the convent of St. Hilda's. A terrible blow falls upon Royal. Mysteriously a man is murdered in the grounds of Marden, and suspicion falls upon him. Circumstantial evidence is so strong that Royal is arrested for the crime.

## CHAPTER V.

THE inhabitants of No. 4, But's Alley, Rosemary Lane, although not apt to feel surprised at anything, could hardly help a little astonishment at the immediate results of Posy's accident, for the first of these was the disappearance of Gentleman Jack and the vacancy of the dingy room on the ground-floor.

Not that "Gentleman Jack" vanished suddenly, leaving his rent unpaid—a not infrequent occurrence in the alley. He paid up like a man, and gave a week extra, in lieu of notice. He seemed very free with his money people decided; they would have thought so still more could they have seen the very comfortable lodgings to which he presently removed, and inspected the complete outfit which he purchased at a ready-made clothing establishment.

Ten minutes' conversation with Lord Delamere and the gentleman beggar knew that his fortune was made. He could almost dictate his own terms to the young nobleman since only through him could Edwin hope to carry out his cherished scheme.

Mr. Dalrymple thought he had found a gold-mine. He was not clever enough to be a very bad man, but he was very far from being a good one. Long ago he had taken a heavy bribe to hold his tongue; silence had really seemed to him the safest course, but now that he had taken a retainer on the other side he meant to speak, unless, indeed, those who desired his silence outbid Lord Delamere.

"Give me three months," was his sole stipulation; and Lord Delamere, who saw no way of accomplishing his desires unaided, had to agree to the bargain, though he chafed at the delay.

Meanwhile Posy came out of the hospital, a pale, careworn little creature, but with face a little less pinched, a trifle less prematurely aged than it had been before.

His love for her was perhaps the best feeling of Gentleman Jack's life.

He offered Posy to share in his good fortune. There was plenty of room for her in the comfortable lodgings, but Posy shook her head decidedly. There was a vein of thorough independence about the little waif. Moreover, Posy was a young person of intense prejudices. Just as she loved Gentleman Jack she hated his friend and ally. She was quite sharp enough to guess that her friend's changed circumstances were owed to the man who had followed her so closely the day of the accident, and she would have nothing to do with them.

"I don't like him," said the waif, stoutly, when Jack had been trying for the last time to shake her resolution. "It's no use you telling

me he's a good friend to you. I don't believe it."

"Posy!" The girl shivered. It was the day before she would leave the hospital; a bright sunny afternoon, and yet she shivered, as though stricken with a chill.

"There's a look in his eyes I can't bear," she said, slowly; "and I wish you wouldn't trust him; there'll be evil come of it."

But Mr. Dalrymple was not going to give up his gold-mine on the bidding of the little waif, favourite of his though she was; so he went back to his comfortable lodgings, and Posy returned to her trade of selling flowers or watercress, according to the season, and no one but a very keen watcher would have said she was much concerned at the absence from the Alley of Gentleman Jack.

But she was; the poor starved heart that had had no one to love had turned in a passion of gratitude to the one creature who had been kind to her.

Posy loved Gentleman Jack with a child's innocence and a woman's devotion. Hard as she had to work to keep body and soul together, she found time to ferret out how he was going on. Posy was as sharp as a needle; she paid visits to the street where he lived; she listened, she asked questions, and piecing out the story for herself, she came to the conclusion that Mr. Hawkins—she knew him by no other name—wanted something done he was ashamed to do himself, and therefore meant to pay her friend to undertake. All the shame and punishment of detection or failure to be Jack's; all the gain and profit of success to be his employer's.

"I hate 'im, I does," said the waif to herself when she had drawn her conclusions. "I wish he'd never followed me to the hospital, and heard where Jack lived; if only I'd refused to tell where I come from!"

It was quite early in the day, but Posy had sold all her flowers. Unusual good fortune and some benevolent soul noticing the weary little face had given her a shilling—actually a whole shilling—over and above the price of the bunch of magnonette they had purchased.

A whole shilling! Posy decided she might take a holiday until the time when it would be late enough to begin her cress selling. Experience had taught her some folks mostly liked cresses for tea, and so she strolled off in the direction of the quiet street whither, on his accession to fortune, her friend had removed.

She met him emerging from his own door dressed as she had never seen him before, a small travelling-bag in his hand.

"You're just in time to say good-bye, Posy," he said, carelessly. "I'm going a journey."

"Where to?" asked Posy, sincerely, for, unlike many street girls, she was not given to much speaking.

"Into the country. Don't you wish you were coming, too?"

"No," and Posy shook her head decidedly. "Who'd buy flowers in the country? Folks say they are to be had there just for the picking!"

"Wouldn't you like to pick some?"

Posy gave a little sigh. Once she had stood next a girl who came from the country, and had entertained her with stories of blue sky and green fields. To see such things for herself seemed to Posy a glimpse of Paradise.

Jack Dalrymple caught the sigh, and pitied the child from his heart. She was such a quaint, old-fashioned little creature; she knew more of life's realities than many old women; and yet, in spite of all, she had managed to

keep something of childhood's simplicity.

"You shall go, Posy," he said, kindly. "I will take you."

"You, dressed up like that!" cried Posy, disdainfully; "folks 'd say you picked me out of the gutter."

"Well, Posy, I will buy you a return ticket, and you shall go in the same train as I do, and look about the fields till you are tired, then the train will bring you back."

"But my cresses," objected Posy.

"I'll buy them all," returned Jack. "See here's a shilling to pay for them, and now you're going to have a real treat, and forget all about But's Alley for a little while."

The money he would spend on the treat would represent Posy's earnings for a month, but it never came into the man's head it would have been better to give it her. In fact, he knew she would not have taken it. A day in the country in the beautiful summer weather must do her good; and, somehow, he did not like to see the little face growing thinner and more pinched every day. Why should not Posy have a treat just for once?

He took her into a pastry-cook's shop and bought her a bag of buns; then they went to the railway station, and he saw her safely into the train, giving directions to the guard to see she got out at Blakesleigh.

There was a grain of superstition in his nature; he did not quite like the errand on which he was bound. Perhaps, he thought, the little kindness to this outcast child was a kind of atonement for the other act, which certainly was no kind one.

They reached Blakesleigh safely. He saw Posy on the platform and would have spoken to her, but she shook her little head at him.

"You're a fine gentleman," she said, sharply, "and mustn't be seen speaking to me. There was a woman in the carriage said most flowers grew at Marden, and I'm off there; if I've time, perhaps I'll come to-morrow and tell you all about it."

She spoke with the importance of a woman.

She gave one look round at the clear blue sky; the tall, leafy trees, luxuriant in their summer pride. She saw the tall summits of the Cathedral, and heard the ripple of the water as it ran between the hills, and it was all so strange and wonderful to her that she said simply:

"I reckon it's only good people who I've seen here, Mr. Jack? The sky's too blue for the bad ones."

It was a childish idea that the blue sky meant Heaven. The words were but a simple thought flitting through the childish brain, but they fell reproachfully on Jack's heart. If only good people lived in this favoured spot, what right had he there? It was two years turned since he had been at Marden—only two years—but, oh! what a gulf between then and now. He had been a little fast, a little reckless, when last he stood on that rustic platform, but there had been no black stain on his name; no terrible remorse then, grinding at his heart, while now—

That was the pity of it. Those two years held such a long record against him, had left him laden with so many sins, he hardly dared to think of the future. Lord Delamere might give him money, might even settle it so that he could not dissipate it in advance, and must, in spite of himself, be comfortably off.

But Lord Delamere could not bring back the father whose heart he had broken; could not restore his self-respect and give him a new future, unstained by hideous memories. No Gold could purchase much, but it could not achieve such things as these.

He knew he was acting a cruel part on this sweet summer day, knew that for the sake of money he meant to strike a cowardly blow at those already in trouble by breaking the silence they had purchased. And yet he meant to do it. Six weeks ago he had settled down to life in But's alley, relieved by wild freaks of extravagant dissipation immediately after receiving his monthly allowance. To-day he felt he





"I HOLD A WARRANT FOR THE ARREST OF SIR ROYAL CHARTERIS ON THE CHARGE OF WILFUL MURDER," SAID THE DETECTIVE, CIVILLY.

could not go back to such an existence. Edwin Delamere had promised to make a new man of him; to pay his passage to a distant colony, and start him handsomely in business, where he might hope to make a home for himself. It had been a cruel temptation, that offer to send the man where no one knew his past, where he could make in all ways a fresh start. Edwin Delamere knew all the fascination such a dream would have for Jack Dalrymple before he made his offer, and therefore I hold his part in the work to be done at Marden was easier far than that of his tool. Jack Dalrymple strove to achieve the promised reward—a fresh start where his past was unknown; but Edwin Delamere had no object but that terrible thirst for vengeance which seemed to have taken possession of him ever since his brother's death.

#### CHAPTER VI.

We left our heroine standing in the little chapel belonging to the community, a bridal veil over her soft brown hair, and the man who for months had been her hero at her side.

Poor little Nell! She did not in the least realise what was happening to her. It had all been so sudden, so wonderful. She had never meant to marry; she had thought her life would always be lonely, and now the lord of Marden Hall, whose story had first awoken her sleeping heart, and whose face seemed to her that of one of the brave knights of olden days, had asked her to be his wife.

She had been given very little time for decision. Sister Ida and Dr. White had told her Sir Royal Charteris would certainly be accused of murder, and if she were called as a witness against him her testimony must prove his guilt. Nell answered she would not go to Court. They might hide her; she would go abroad, anything in the world rather than that Sir Royal should be sent to death by act of hers.

Doctor and Sister both gave her the same

answer. The law would have power to search for her wherever she went. Only in one way could her testimony against Sir Royal be averted—if before she were called on to give it she had become his wedded wife. Nell protested she never meant to marry. Sir Royal knew nothing of her. Sister Ida put the case before her plainly, and, as it seemed to the kind old doctor, a little cruelly. There was no time for considerations of that kind. The question was simply this—would she marry Sir Royal, or would she let her words send him to a violent death?

Nell begged for delay, and was told delay would be fatal. To be complete the sacrifice must be prompt, and then the poor child had hidden her face on the Sister's bosom, and whispered, pitifully—

"Anything to save him!"

Perhaps it was merciful for Nell that she had very little suspense. Her consent was given before noon on Tuesday. Dr. White left her there, sending a composing draught to still the nervous agitation which was consuming her. Indeed, she needed repose, poor child, after Monday's tragedy, and all the excitement she had undergone. She slept peacefully as a baby till late on Wednesday, and then Sister Ida, who chose to take Sir Royal's consent as a matter of course, had arranged everything for the wedding to take place that evening, although she was well aware that the bridegroom could not hear of the proposal until Dr. White's return from London. Mr. Drake was an old friend of the Superior's, and to him she confided the facts of the case. Perhaps in her heart of hearts Sister Ida congratulated herself on the Bishop's absence from Marden. "My lord" could not perform the slightest clerical act without trying to make a grand function out of it. Had poor Nell's destiny been confided to him he would have published it to the world by telegraphing in all directions for a string of clergy to "assist" him,

and would most likely have gone to London to consult some authority as to whether it was not derogatory to a Bishop to marry a bridegroom who certainly was, in some measure, a suspected criminal.

Mr. Drake was widely different from my lord. He listened to the Sister's story (be very sure his silence about it had first been requested) with intense interest, and when she had persisted, said simply:

"Poor child, poor child!"

Sister Ida felt indignant. For the life of her the woman who had once loved Royal Charteris could not understand how any girl could need pity for becoming his wife!

"I think it is Poor Sir Royal," she said, slowly. "Think of his sacrifice—a Baronet, with wealth and every personal gift, compelled to marry a simple, unformed girl whom he has hardly seen!"

"But he does it to save his life. Besides, he must grow to care for her when he thinks of all she has sacrificed for him, even were she other than the sweet-faced girl we know."

"Helena is a good little thing!" said the Superior, slowly; "but not in the least likely to attract a man like Sir Royal."

"I call her fascinating!"

"She was sent here nearly two years ago because her relations found her a dead weight on their hands; but for some old-fashioned prejudice against Anglican convents I am certain they would have been rejoiced for her to take the veil."

The Vicar shook his head.

"She has not the least vocation for a Sister's life. Believe me, Sister Ida, that child was made to be a happy wife, the sunshine of some good man's home; and now will you let me see her?"

"Is it necessary?"

Mr. Drake looked grave.

"We are old friends, Sister Ida, and you may not be offended if I speak plainly. I can-

not agree to perform the ceremony unless I have assured myself Miss Fortescue is no unwilling bride."

Sister Ida looked displeased. (Sisters are not quite angels, reader mine, neither is a Sisterhood quite Heaven, though no doubt far on the way to it.) "I see no occasion for it surely," and she smiled. "You don't think I have forced Nell into submission?"

"I don't think that; but she is a sensitive creature, and she may have taken up the notion that for Sir Royal's sake she is bound to marry him."

The Vicar went into the large apartment known as the Common Room. Nell sat in the window darning some of the industrials' stockings (articles which were always in need of such attention). She started as she saw the kind old man, and then a deep pink colour dyed her cheeks as he went up to her and said gravely,—

"Can you put your work away for a little, Miss Fortescue, and come out into the sunshine? I want to talk to you."

Phyllis Ward was at Nell's side, and the little black sheep of the band of workers looked appealingly at the Vicar.

"Oh, Mr. Drake!" she cried, "what *have* we been doing now? What are you going to scold Nell for?"

"Nothing!" declared the Vicar reassuringly; "and I did not know you *had* been doing anything wrong, Miss Ward, what is it?"

"Sister Ida always says I am too worldly, and that I try to make Nell as bad; so I thought, may be, she had told you so."

"Sister takes her confidences about you young ladies to the Bishop; I am quite innocent of them."

"Then it wasn't you who changed our seats?"

"Changed your seats!" exclaimed the Vicar; "my dear, what do you mean?"

"On Sundays," explained Phyllis. "You see, Mr. Drake, we never see people any other days; and that was our one little glimpse of the world. We used to go quite early and look round before the service began to see who was there, and who had got new bonnets; and now," drearily, "we are poked behind, with a perfect boundary on all sides of Sisters and industrials. I can't see anything else now, and so I look straight into my lap."

"Poor girl!" said the Vicar, with a smile; "but I assure you, though I'm sorry, I see no way of altering it, so do cheer up!"

"I'll try," promised Phyllis. "It has one good point—as we can't see anyone no one can see us, and so we can wear shabby gloves."

There was a smile on Mr. Drake's face, but it had faded when he and Nell were in the garden beyond the range of Phyllis Ward's keen eyes.

"My dear child," he began gravely, "the Superior has been talking to me about you. She has told me of your generosity, and asked if I will perform the ceremony to-night."

Nell shivered just a little.

"Must it be so soon?"

"Miss Fortescue. It shall never be at all, so far as I am concerned, if you have any feeling of compunction, my dear. Let me speak to you as your own father might do. Do you wish to marry Sir Royal Charteris?"

"I can't bear to think of what may happen if I don't."

"Put the consequences aside. Tell me, do you think you can be happy as his wife?"

"If he loved me," she whispered; "no one has ever done that really."

Mr. Drake felt relieved.

"You think, then, that Sir Royal's affection would win your own?"

Nell blushed.

"If only he loved me," she said, faintly, "I should be quite happy—only—"

"Only what?"

"Marriage is for all time," said Nell, with a half sob. "Don't you think some day, when the memory of his danger had worn off, he might be sorry?"

"Never!" answered the Vicar, firmly. "If he accepted your sacrifice now, be sure he would never regret it. I have known him all his life. He is a good man and true. If this had come about in any other way—I mean, if you had had time to become acquainted with each other—I should have said no two people could have been better suited."

"But I am only a friendless orphan, and he is Sir Royal Charteris. Why, Mr. Drake, my own relations think me a burden!"

"Never mind. Sir Royal will cherish his wife too fondly for her to need outside affection. You have taken a weight off my mind, Miss Fortescue. I had feared Sister Ida might have overpersuaded you into consenting. Now I feel that you take this step of your own free will."

Nell bowed her head.

"Of my own free will."

A wave of excitement swept over St. Hilda's, of course. The whole community would not be admitted into the secret, but sufficient had happened publicly to agitate a household whose usual course was of the most regular and matter-of-fact character. The murder so near them, within a stone's throw, so to speak, of their gardens—why, the murder alone would have kept the workers in gossip for a month. Then there was Nell's illness, the Superior's agitation, and Mr. Drake's visit. St. Hilda's felt itself quite important, and the five workers watched Nell's slight figure at the Vicar's side as they returned from that *à-tête* ramble with intense anxiety.

"What could he want to say to her?"

"Nell is never in scrapes!" said Hester Stanhope, decidedly. "Now, if it had been you, Phyllis."

"It generally is me," said Phyllis, a little dejectedly. "I seem endowed with a most unlucky knack of getting into scrapes. Sister Joan was scolding me only yesterday about the red feather in my hat. I do think the murder might put such trifles out of her head. Ah! here comes Nell."

But Nell did not join them. She gave them a little nod, and went on to the Superior's room. They saw no more of her till at tea.

Sister Ida sent Phyllis to carry Nell's tray, adding she might stay and bear her company if she liked.

Phyllis *did* like, and when Nell Fortescue told her secret, and asked Phyllis to be her bridesmaid, her surprise knew no bounds.

"But you never meant to marry any one," she objected. "I really thought you would end by being a sister."

"You see I am going to marry."

"And Sir Royal Charteris? Why, you'll be a real live ladyship!"

"I never thought of that."

Phyllis gave her an affectionate little shake.

"What did you think of then? It can't be love, for I am sure you have hardly spoken to him. Why are you going to marry Sir Royal?"

"I can't tell you. Oh, Phyllis! won't you hope we shall be happy?"

Phyllis kissed her fondly.

"I'll hope you may be happy, Nell. As to Sir Royal, I have no doubts of it. Why, child, a man couldn't be miserable with you if he tried. When's the wedding to be, soon?"

"To-night."

Phyllis dropped her tray in bewilderment.

"Are you dreaming, Nell? Why, you are only just engaged! Besides, weddings are always in the daytime."

"I am not dreaming, dear; and I can't explain it to you, but it is to be to-night in the chapel."

"Then that is what Mr. Drake wanted?"

"Yes."

"And will they all know?"

"No one will know but the Vicar and Sister Ida besides myself. I can trust you, Phyllis!"

"Of course you can," declared Phyllis.

"But, Nell, I feel as if all my ideas were turned topsy-turvy. You're the last girl in

the world I should have expected to have a stolen wedding."

"It's not that."

"A hurried one, then! None of your own people there or anything. What will they say?"

"Sister thinks they can't mind."

"Well, Nell, the strangest part of it to me is *her* approving. I'm sure ever since I've been here they've taught us married life is nothing but vanity and trouble. When she's most spiteful, Sister Ida says I require the discipline of married life; but you, her favourite, to hurry you into matrimony like this is wonderful! I can't help thinking she's gone out of her mind!"

Nell shook her head.

"And what are you going to wear?"

"This," replied the bride-elect, simply.

"Black! My dear child, you're sure to be unlucky. A bride ought to wear white!"

"But I haven't a white dress, Phyllis," and the voice was very wistful. "Please be kind to me; it is all so strange, and I feel so tired."

Phyllis kissed her fondly.

"Don't fret," she said, in a protecting way that suited her wonderfully. "I daresay you'll be very happy; and you know, Nell, you never were like other people, so it's right you should have a different sort of wedding. I only wish it was me. Why, you'll be the richest woman in Highshire!"

She was that already, if they had only known the contents of her grandfather's will.

Sister Ida came in presently with the lace veil, and fixed it herself on the soft hair. There was something gentler than usual in the Superior's manner. Even Phyllis felt the difference; and then, before either of the girls quite knew what to say to her, Sister Ida had left them to welcome Sir Royal, and then, a moment later, the little party had gathered in the chapel.

Phyllis never cared to speak of that wedding much; it made the tears come into her eyes.

"You see," she told someone, "I was fond of Nell, and I knew he couldn't love her. She has just one of those hearts which can't be happy without love, and when I saw her in her long lace veil I couldn't help wondering whether a day would ever come when she'd regret that night's work." But Nell gave no sign of regretting it then. She made her responses in a clear, distinct voice; and when Sir Royal took her hand to put on it the magic golden circlet it never trembled. He marvelled at her calmness, and put her down as a heartless coquette, thankful to take advantage of his distress to become a lady of title.

He little guessed that her apathy was the result of fatigue and overwrought feeling—that she had felt and suffered so much in the last eight-and-forty hours, nothing seemed to have the power to move her much.

It was over. The knot death only could untie had been fastened in a very few moments. Of the three witnesses Dr. White was the most relieved; he had feared the bride's strength would hardly last through the ceremony, brief as it was.

As for the Superior, her expression was one of stony fortitude—her face betrayed nothing, but it took a good deal to overawe Phyllis Ward; and with a smile on her lip she was going to turn back the heavy lace veil for Nell to sign the register, but the bride, with a whispered word, forbade her. The face was still veiled, and Nell extricated one little hand from its heavy folds to sign her name for the last time.

"Is it over?" asked Sir Royal.

"Quite," returned the Vicar. "You are as truly married as though the Bishop had performed the ceremony before a crowded congregation in the cathedral. I hope you may be happy."

Sir Royal muttered something between his teeth, then he gave his hand to Nell, and led her slowly down the aisle, followed by Phyllis, Sister Ida, and the doctor, while Mr. Drake remained to put off his surplice.



Only when they stood in the open air did it occur to Sir Royal that he did not know in the least what to do with the new-made Lady Charteris. In all the discussions respecting the marriage its necessity and its haste had alone been urged. No one had ever said a single word respecting the future course of the bride and bridegroom; and now Sir Royal stood irresolute, wondering if the "young woman" could be left at St. Hilda's, or whether she expected him to instal her at once as lady of Marden Hall.

It was unaccountable that they should have ignored this simple question, that one and all of the six who had spoken of the marriage should yet never have said a single word of what was to happen to the newly-wedded pair after the ceremony was over.

Sir Royal looked inquiringly at Sister Ida. Surely she would understand his predicament, and give him some instructions as to how he should dispose of his new-made wife. The Superior saw that anxious glance, and was about to speak, when one of the bigger industrialists, who was allowed to act as portress, rushed towards the party, too frightened to remember ceremony or the rule which forbade anyone to disturb Sister Ida while engaged with visitors.

"Oh, Sister, Sister!" cried the shock-headed dandy; "there's two men at the gate, and they will come, in spite of all I can say; they be following me now, and they say they'll search the house through every room of it."

Sister Ida's face grew very pale as she looked at Sir Royal. He, too, knew what the men wanted, and who they were; but he was a Charteris, and he never flinched at the prospect which lay before him. Perhaps, he reflected, it would at least solve the difficulty which had so puzzled him.

Christina had said the truth; the men were following her closely. They came up almost as soon as she had finished speaking. Sister Ida stepped forward, standing so as to screen Nell from their view. Sir Royal dropped his wife's hand, and took his place at the Superior's side.

"What is the meaning of this unseemly visit?"

"Beg pardon, ma'am!" said the man, civilly, who had advanced into the hall; "but duty's duty. Sir Royal Charteris was seen to come here, so here we had to come after him. There's a warrant out for his arrest on the charge of—"

Sir Royal interrupted them.

"I am quite ready," he said, slowly. "I never hurt a hair of the man's head, but I quite expected it would come to this."

He advanced to the man, erect and dignified, looking more like a nobleman about to listen to some petition than a criminal awaiting arrest. There was no trace of guilt or even of fear in his aspect.

"Where shall you take me?" he demanded, gravely.

"To Blakesleigh, Sir Royal! The coroner's jury returned a verdict of wilful murder, and you'll have to go before the magistrate to-morrow!"

"So be it," returned the Baronet, gravely. "Dr. White," to his kind old friend, "will you go to the Hall and break the news to my servants? Some of them have grown old in our family, and deserve not to hear this first from public gossip."

The doctor turned his head, and Sir Royal turned once more to the two men.

"I am ready!"

Sister Ida took his hand and held it a moment or two longer than is usual for an ordinary farewell; but the woman who was to bear his name stood motionless. Poor little Nell seemed frozen into stone. One time she tried to speak, but her trembling lips could not obey her. Not until her husband was out of sight did she find her voice. Then she turned to the Vicar with a kind of choked sob.

"Oh, sir! will they kill him?"

"I hope not—I trust not. He is in Heaven's hands, Lady Charteris, and Heaven does not destroy the innocent. Let that comfort you."

Phyllis felt the trembling of the hand she took, and was seized with an inspiration.

"Nell is tired to death," she said to Sister Ida. "Let me take her in and put her to bed, or she will be ill again."

The doctor interposed.

"I am ready to escort Lady Charteris home at once," he said, kindly; "and if the Superior could spare you, I am sure it would be a comfort to your friend to have you with her."

Phyllis looked perplexed.

"Take Nell away! When Sir Royal has gone to prison what would she do alone in that great deserted house?"

"It is her home henceforward," said Sister Ida, coldly. "The same danger which caused her marriage requires her this very night to take her place as mistress of Marden Hall."

Nell rallied her courage. After all, anything was better than staying at St. Hilda's, exposed to the endless questions of the whole community, not to say of all the workers.

"I am quite ready!"

"And you will spare Miss Ward?" urged the doctor to Sister Ida. "Indeed, Lady Charteris is not fit to be alone."

Sister Ida shrugged her shoulders.

"It is very inconvenient," she said, sharply, "but I suppose I must. Remember, Phyllis, I expect you to behave discreetly, and not go gadding about reflecting discredit on St. Hilda's."

"I could not leave Nell to go gadding about," returned Phyllis, in a strangely gentle voice. "You may trust me to take care of her."

With tender hand she unfastened the lace veil, and herself replaced it by a plain straw hat. Sister Ida promised to let one of the industrialists bring a bag of necessary things later, so the two girls took no luggage with them.

Dr. White gave Nell his arm. Phyllis was on her other side. Not a word was spoken after they had said farewell to St. Hilda's; perhaps the hearts of all of them were too full for speech. Only when they had passed the lodge and were walking up the avenue Phyllis asked, suddenly:

"Shall you tell the servants?"

"Of the arrest? That was one of my chief reasons for coming; the other was to try to be of use to your friend."

"I meant, should you tell them of the marriage?"

"They know it."

"I know it already."

"I spoke to the housekeeper before we left. She knows that Sir Royal was to be married to Miss Fortescue to-night."

"Then she expects Nell?"

"I can hardly say that; I know that Lady Charteris will be welcomed with all due respect."

And she was. The butler threw open the hall door and revealed all the servants drawn up in a long line, with Mrs. Carter at their head. The dejected look on every face told the truth—that they knew of their master's captivity.

Dr. White felt his tidings were forestalled.

"Sir Ralph has been taken to Blakesleigh," he said, simply, "my friends, to answer for a crime he never did. It may be he will not be able to return to you for some days, but you who know the Charteris motto, 'Truth before all,' will understand your master is the victim of a cruel mistake. In his absence I have to present to you your mistress, and beg you, for the love you bear to Sir Royal, to show all respect and honour to his wife."

They knew just how it was, and for what reason Sir Royal had rushed headlong into matrimony; but when they looked on the fair, girlish face, looking so childish and innocent, a great pity filled their hearts. She was so pretty; she looked so sad, and she had been willing to give the whole future into Sir

Royal's keeping rather than a word of hers should harm him.

From all those throats there came a kind of another sob, and many a voice re-echoed the butler's husky words, "Heaven bless her."

She was so unlike the stately dames who had ruled at Marden, and different from the handsome matrons whose pictures hung in the long gallery; just a slip of a girl with golden brown hair and soft, velvety eyes; a creature with a sad, almost wistful, expression, as though life had not been all smiles for her. Truly, her lot seemed hard. Married suddenly to a man who had no love for her; robbed by the law of her husband within an hour of their union, and now brought, alone and unexpected, to the stately house over which hung the shadow of a great trouble!

Dr. White withdrew, and Mrs. Carter herself took the bride up to a handsome suite of rooms on the first floor. She longed to speak some word of sympathy, but none would come, and it was Nell at last who broke the silence.

"You were his nurse, I think; they said so. You know he never did it— He couldn't have done it, you know!"

"No, my lady," said the old servant, respectfully. "All those who know Sir Royal will feel that— Ah! but it's a sad home-coming for you."

Phyllis waited till the door had closed on the housekeeper, then she went up to Nell and kissed her. The cares broke down the bride's composure. She sobbed as though her heart would break.

"Oh, Nell!" said Phyllis, clasping her arms around her, "don't cry like that. Think how many people believe he is innocent."

"It isn't that," sobbed Nell.

"What then?" a terrible fear awaiting her.

"Oh, Nell, are you regretting it already?"

Nell dashed the tears from her eyes.

"If I could have the time over again, Phyllis, I should do just the same; but I am so frightened."

"Of what, dear?" bending over her. "Nell, can't you trust me?"

Nell hid her face on her friend's shoulder. "I love him so," she whispered. "Oh, Phyllis, I think I loved him before ever I saw him. If he ever comes to regret that he married me—if he can't learn to love me back again—I think it will break my heart."

Phyllis felt ready to cry too, but for Nell's sake she battled with the desire, and spoke practically, almost harshly.

"You are just overtired, Nell, and must go to bed. Oh, what a liberty I am taking in calling you by the old name still! I suppose I ought to say Lady Charteris; and now I won't utter another word, for your ladyship must try to sleep."

But no sleep came to Nell's brown eyes. She lay awake all night, thinking a little of the fearful sight she had witnessed by the river's bank, and a great deal of the husband who did not love her, and to whom alas! with girlish romance, she had given the first fervour of her pure, young heart.

(To be continued next week.)

This story commenced in No. 2,043. Back numbers can be obtained through all News-agents.

#### WHEN THE HEART SINGS.

Every day's a holiday—  
Every winter golden May  
When the heart sings on the way.

Not one flower is better sweet;  
Where the lights and shadows meet  
There are lilies at Life's feet.

Faith in all the prayers we pray—  
Truth in all we dream and say  
When the heart sings on the way.

"A MAN'S funny-bone," said a little boy in an examination, "is what makes him laugh in his sleeve."

## A WAIF FROM THE SEA

NOVELETTE.

(Concluded from page 371.)

If only she could procure some more of it her fortune would be made, she declared. Never had she seen anything even approaching it in beauty.

Ellaline's life in her new home was one of almost perfect happiness, idolised by her husband as she was.

Lady Alicia was an ideal mother-in-law, and even the haughty old Squire grew very fond of his son's wife.

Indeed, after a lovely boy had made his appearance as heir to all those broad lands, and to beg the joy and pride of his grandfather's heart, the Squire quite forgave Ellaline the fact that she was the first wife of a head of the house of Crewsdon whose genealogy could not be traced back to the Saxon Heptarchy, or some like remote period, and was never tired of extolling her excellence.

Yet, amid all her happiness, Ellaline had one regret.

This was that Luke Polwhil had drifted entirely out of her life.

While old Ben lived he had stayed at the cottage, tending him and indulging all his childish fancies; but when he died—which he did about a year after Ellaline's marriage—Luke paid a second and last visit to Crewsdon Hall to tell them he had sold the cottage, and was going to try his fortunes in a foreign land, and to bid them farewell—an eternal farewell, as it proved; for though, in answer to her entreaties, he promised to write from time to time, from the hour he left their threshold neither Dudley nor Ellaline ever again beheld or heard from Luke Polwhil.

Dudley's wife grieved at this sincerely. She often wondered whether he had been drowned at sea, or whether his bones were bleaching on the scorching desert sand, beneath a blazing sun; but she never knew the real truth—that it was the memory of his hopeless love for her which had driven him into voluntary exile, even while he hungered for the sight of her face, the sound of her soft voice; how he feared that if he remained he might one day reveal it to her; and how, sometimes, he thought—though these moments were rare indeed—it would have been better for him had he never seen or rescued his WAIF FROM THE SEA!

[THE END.]

## THE TALE OF A STAMP.

I'm a stamp—a postage stamp—a penny one. I don't want to brag, but I was never licked except once, by a gentleman, too; he put me on to a good thing; it was an envelope—perfumed, pink, square. I've been stuck on that envelope ever since; he dropped us—the envelope and me—through a slot in a dark box; but we were rescued by a sorting clerk, more's the pity; he hit me an awful smash with a hammer; it left my face black and blue; then I went on a long journey. When we arrived—the pink envelope and me—we were presented to a perfect love of a girl, with the stunningest pair of blue eyes. Say, she's a dream! Well, she mutilated the pink envelope and tore one corner of me off with a hairpin. Then she read what was in the pink envelope. I never saw a girl blush so beautifully! I would be stuck on her if I could. Well, she placed the writing back in the pink envelope; then she kissed me. Oh! you little angel! Her lips were ripe as cherries and warm as the summer sun. We—the pink envelope and me—are now nestling snugly in her bosom; we can hear her heart throbbing; when it goes fastest she takes us out and kisses me. Oh, this is great! I'm glad I'm a stamp—a penny one.

## HIS INCUMBRANCE

By UNCLE BENJAMIN.

Some years ago I was a guest at a wedding. There were a great many sad things about the affair. It was in a stately mansion, and the bride and groom stood amid the most costly drawing-room furnishings that vast wealth could purchase. It was a very distinguished company, too, though not large, made up of friends in one of the most aristocratic quarters of the fashionable world.

But the sad part of it all was that the stepfather of the fair bride had failed in business and in mind; he had gone a week before to an asylum, incurable. That hastened the wedding. The magnificent estate was at once to be vacated and taken by creditors. The girl's mother had died a year before. The young fellow decided to marry her at once, for I think he loved her. That would give him the right to take care of her.

There was, however, another child—a defenceless little boy, that day not over six years old. He was half-brother to the bride, being the only child of her dead mother and the now insane bankrupt. I remember, in the midst of the ceremony, just as the clergyman pronounced the Amen, a peal of quivering grief, with sob on sob, burst from behind to the right of the couple. The cry was, of course, inharmonious with such an occasion. It startled everybody, and was just enough to set fire to the sadness in women's hearts, instantly melting many of them to tears. The boy was looked after by his sister, gently enough, and she gave him the first kiss. Perhaps this act still further ruffled the groom, though he said nothing about the kiss, as he took the second.

"What are you crying for?" sweetly asked the bride.

"Cause I'm—all-alone now! I shall have no sister!" sobbed the little fellow.

He was such a charmingly handsome and bright little creature that, already a neighbourhood favourite, we were all moved to tears, except the groom and a few of his ultra-stylish friends. He was very indignant, reddened and paled, and was deeply angered at "the entire upset of his wedding." He hated the boy.

Afterwards, at the breakfast table, I overheard him explaining about the child to a fast friend:—

"Oh, he's my incumbrance. By Jupiter, I don't know what to do with the little cad."

Time passed on. I believe "the little cad" was sent to a boarding-school. I know his then rich brother-in-law wholly spurned him, in spite of his wife's protestations. The child's love for his sister, however, continued steadfast, and grew. His noble nature seemed not to resent the contempt of his brother-in-law.

Time passed. The brother-in-law had wrecked his fortune, and used to pester us all, of his old circle of friends, by his thousand schemes for getting on his feet again. He worked hard enough, was ambitious enough; but somehow he could not succeed. I know, for one, I used actually to dread seeing the fate-dogged fellow come in at my office door. It was impossible to set him up. At length I lost sight of him. Where he went to no one seemed to know. The family had simply disappeared, as thousands do in city life, like a spray of apple blossom that floats in a river for a summer's day, thrown by a careless hand, and by evening are seen no more.

Last week this husband of eighteen years ago came into my office again. He wore every sign of prosperity, and even opulence. Of course, I was immensely surprised, and made bold to ask lots of questions, which he seemed more than glad to answer. How all this change for the better? What had happened?

"My little incumbrance did it," he exclaimed. And I'll give him the credit to say that his eyes were moist with the dew of gratitude. "You remember the little chap who broke out belowing the day I was married—the boy that I didn't know what to do

with, and so threw off. Well, he proved smarter than chain-lightning. The boy graduated without my congratulations, went to Africa, struck a big business, and is worth a million. He loved his sister. Thank God, I was not hated. He needed me. I am in his employ on a good salary, and so forth. Hurrah!"

It is never safe to hate a boy. For instance, your wife's youngest brother, sir. Now, perhaps, he is in your way. You have to give him a home or pay his school bills, because he is your wife's brother. You don't like him, perhaps, and mainly because he is a sort of incumbrance that you had to take with your wife. My friend, read this little story, and be careful how you treat the boy. Not all boys are so forgiving as the one in my tale.

Remember, reader, that a boy has, in the course of nature, rights to twenty or thirty years more in the present century than you have. Remember that you have worn out a good many things, your nerve, your golden opportunity, your hope, the patience of some friends. But to the boy all these things are as yet new and unexhausted. To-day the boy is your friend; keep him a friend. You may need him.

Remember that boyish impressions are very vivid, and remain in the wax of the young soul when it has hardened like eternal amber. Do not throw unnecessary flies into that amber. I think there is nothing a sensitive child feels so keenly as contempt. If you treat a child as an impertinence, while you are courting his sister—if you get very angry when the little joker hides behind the sofa, and the next day tells how you kissed Sue—look out! Better forgive it. Better draw the boy to you.

For the years pass on and a young life, growing up at our side to esteem and love us, may yet prove a prop and stay in heavy storm. The meanest thing a young fellow can think is, as he goes to woo a daughter, "All I want of that family is the pretty girl. Give me her, and the rest of the crowd may go to the dogs!" Maybe you will go to the dogs, unless someone of the crowd save you out of love of their sister.

## OLD RECIPES.

To take away hair: Take the shells of fifty-two eggs, beat them small, and still them with a good fire, and with the water anoint yourself where you would have the hair off.

To make the face fair, and for the breath: Take the flowers of Rosemary and seeth them in white-wine, with which wash your face; if you drink thereof, it will make you have a sweet breath.

To make children's teeth come without pain (proved): Take the head of a Hare, boiled or roasted, and with the brains thereof mingle honey and butter, and therewith anoint the child's gums as often as you please.

## BECAUSE OF THEE.

Because of thee,  
O gem so rare,  
The world has grown  
Most wondrous fair.

And in the sky  
If clouds there be,  
They're lined with gold  
This day for me;

Because of thee,  
O love so dear,  
For thou art mine,  
Though far or near.

And evermore  
My song shall be  
Of richest tone,  
Because of thee.  
While our two lives  
Must sweetly blend,  
Like vesper bells,  
Unto the end.



## Facetiæ

"Is there anything brilliant about Prozer's writings?" "Yes. The stars between the paragraphs."

Man's happiness is said to hang upon a thread that is never at hand to sew on the shirt-button that is always off.

"Do you practise on your own family, doctor?" "Yes, madam." "And what medicines do you prescribe?" "None."

"How did you happen to adopt such a perilous profession as submarine diving?" "In order to keep my head above water."

"Does position affect sleep?" asked a medical writer. "It does not when the man holds the position of night watchman."

"His real business in life is yachting; he plays at the bar for amusement." This describes a pleasant type of modern man.

A LITTLE boy remarked, "I like grandpa because he is such a gentlemanly man; he always tells me to help myself to sugar."

A SCHOOL TEACHER asked an Irish boy to describe an island. "Sure, ma'am," said Pat, "it is a place you can't leave without a boat."

SHE was, presumably, a young and inexperienced housekeeper who, on the occasion of "company for dinner," had the olives boiled.

OLD Bachelor: "Don't care to marry, Miss Smith? Prefer to keep your liberty?" "Nonsense, I intend to do both when I get a good chance."

"Don't you think," asked a conceited fiddler of a critic, "that I can play the violin like Paganini?" "Yes," said the critic, "or any other ninny."

A PAUPER woman, who was being commiserated for having lost all her teeth—"Sure, an isn't it time to lose them when I've got nothing for them to do!"

BARBER: "You are getting quite bald, sir. Can't I recommend something for your head?" Mr. Hurry: "Yes; I'd like my hat as soon as possible."

THERE is no rule without its exception. The Czar's rule, for instance, has several exceptions. They are not generally called exceptions, however, but Nihilists.

DOCTOR: "There, get that prescription filled, and take a tablespoonful three times a day before meals." PAUPER Patient: "But, doctor, I don't get but one meal in two days."

TEACHER: "Keep your hand down, Johnny Billings: when I am ready I will call upon you." (Ten minutes later): "Now, John Billings, I will hear what you have to say." John Billings: "I only wanted to tell yer that I seed a tramp in the hall prig yer gold-headed umbrella."

HIS Diagnosis: Dr. Mixwell (who has asked Mrs. Whiffet to put out her tongue): "You say your husband is very nervous and irritable?" Mrs. Whiffet: "Yes; terribly so. But I'm not ill." Dr. Mixwell (calmly): "I think I'll prescribe a long sea voyage." "For John?" "No; for you."

A BRIGHT ten-year-old girl, whose father is addicted to amateur photography, attended a trial at court, the other day, for the first time. This was her account of the judge's charge: "The judge made a long speech to the jury of twelve men, and then sent them off into a little dark room to develop."

MR. GORNOX: "What are you doing out there in the chill night air? Come into the house." Gladys: "I was just admiring the moon, papa." Mr. Gornox: "What business have you admiring the moon when there are so many things in the house that I have bought expressly for you to admire? Anybody can admire the moon."

THE PUNISHMENT.—"What's the penalty for bigamy?" "Two mothers-in-law!"

A MONETARY CHOICE.—"Which do you like better—money or nobility?" "Well, I love a dollar, but I worship a sovereign!"

A DELICATE POISE.—Madge: "Why do you treat Charlie so coolly when Jack is around?" Dolly: "I'm engaged to both."

EXPLAINED.—"They say the first year of married life is the hardest of all." "Well, why not? They see so much of each other!"

AN ELOPEMENT.—Summer Hotel Clerk (to bride and groom): "Do you wish a northern or a southern exposure?" Bride (blushingly): "Oh, please, sir, no exposure at all!"

A SMALL THING.—The Wife: "Oh, George, I've lost by bathing-suit! What shall I do?" The Husband: "Don't say anything about it, and it won't be missed."

PARTING AT LONG ISLAND.—He: "Good-bye, Madge, dear!" (The ocean waves.) She: "Good-bye, dearest Jack!" (The seashore.) He: "Kiss me just once more." (We heard the Sound.)

EMMA (to her intended): "Just think, Charlie, so-and-so proposed to me yesterday." Charlie: "What did you say to him?" "I told him I was very sorry, but I was already engaged."

"LADIES," said the old grey-headed teacher, "I'm sorry to confess it, but I'd rather have five young men from the high school than one of you." "So would we, teacher," was the general reply.

"It's a fact, old man. Since I met that girl I cannot eat or sleep. I am a miserable man. Is there nothing I can do to cure myself of this mad infatuation?" "You might try marrying her."

PATIENT: "I am ever so glad to be up again, doctor. You wouldn't do anything to cause a relapse, would you?" Doctor: "Why, of course not." "Then don't bring in your bill for about twelve months."

"WELL, Mr. Bronson," said a dominie, "I hope you derived profit from the services this morning." "Sir," returned Bronson, inclined to be indignant, "I assure you I drop business on Sunday and attend church with no hope of profit."

"Who's that?" asked a young lady, pointing to a statuette on the library table. "That's a head of the Apollo Belvidere," answered her friend. "Apollo! Why, how queer she does up her hair! I always thought Apollo was a gentleman."

A VERY OLD FAMILY.—Jenkins (examining the pedigree which Snobson has just had manufactured): "So this is your family tree, is it? And what is that big gap in the middle?" Snobson: "That, er—well, er—Oh that is the flood!"

AT a ministerial conference the presiding officer announced that Elder H. would, at the afternoon session, read a paper on "The Devil," and added, "Please be prompt in attendance, for Brother H. has a carefully prepared paper and is full of his subject."

"ONLY A NAVAL OFFICER."—Old Lady (at the railway station, to man in uniform): "What time does the next train go to Brighton?" Man: "I don't know, ma'am." Old Lady: "Then you ought to." Man: "I am not a railway porter, madam." Old Lady: "Then what are you?" Man: "Only a naval officer."

FRIEND: "So yours was a case of love at first sight?" Mrs. Lovejoy: "Yes, indeed, I fell desperately in love with my dear husband the moment I set eyes upon him. I remember it as distinctly as if it were yesterday. I was walking with papa on the promenade at Brighton, when suddenly papa stopped, and, pointing him out, said: 'There, my dear, is a man worth £100,000.'"

## A New Industry for English Girls

Arrangements are now being made for the opening up of a new industry—viz., "Panama" hat making. This new industry, it is said, will provide employment for hundreds of girls. Factory life has, however, many drawbacks. Headache, biliousness, anemia, and indigestion prevail to an enormous extent amongst factory workers, but Bile Beans for Biliousness are a certain cure for these ailments. Proof of this is to be found in the following statement of Mrs. G. Woodcroft, a straw-hat maker, of 29, Essex Street, Luton. To a representative of the "Luton Reporter" she said:—"Ever since I can recollect I have suffered a good deal from biliousness. It has sometimes kept me from following my occupation at the factory for five days out of the six. When these attacks came on they were accompanied by giddiness. My sight was also affected, and I was unable to see anything very clearly. I continually experienced a sensation of coldness in my arms and legs, and even in the morning I felt sleepy and drowsy. A languid feeling would quite overcome me, and I could not take an interest in anything. I visited many doctors, and took bottle after bottle of their medicine. Then I tried various patent medicines and remedies that my neighbours advised, but still I got no better. I heard of Bile Beans, and bought a supply. Soon after commencing using them I began to feel much better. The languid feeling disappeared, and I do not now feel drowsy as I used to do, but, on the contrary, I have more energy than ever I had before. Since taking Bile Beans I have not had a single attack of biliousness." Bile Beans for Biliousness are a certain cure for indigestion, biliousness, "summer lag," tired feeling, liver and kidney disorder, sleeplessness, headache, constipation, drowsiness, anemia, skin eruptions, all blood impurities, and all female ailments. Of all Chemists, or post free from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119, London Wall, London, E.C., for one and three halfpence or two and nine a box.

## Gems

CHILDHOOD shows the man, as morning shows the day.

WHEN a man feels that he is doing right, others think so too.

PRIVATE opinion is weak, but public opinion is almost omnipotent.

SUCCESS and happiness are only to be had in giving up our own will.

THERE are souls in this world that have the gift of finding joy everywhere.

POVERTY of possessions need not be creditable; poverty of life always is.

DON'T provoke an ugly discussion by bringing up a disagreeable subject.

THE smart men of the world are those who put the shoulders of others to the wheel.

NEVER disparage the commonplace. What is more commonplace than a mother's love?

A VICE never seems to us so horrible as when practised by some one we do not like.

A KIND thought is like a blossom. It always has the potential fruit of a good deed at its heart.

THE more people you have to consult the less probability is there of a lasting agreement being arrived at on any subject.

A GREAT point is gained when we have learned not to struggle against the circumstances God has appointed for us.

SOME men are madly overpraised, some have been made martyrs, but their spoken word passes onward, and if not in their own day, in that to-morrow which is the to-day of other men, the truth of their harvest is garnished and bound in sheaves.

# EDEN'S SACRIFICE

## CHAPTER XXIX. (Continued).

"I CANNOT forget that you saved my life, Wilfred."

"Nor that I was the cause of the illness that very nearly took it."

"You must not say that."

"I—I have something to tell you, dear."

"Well."

"Not now—to-morrow. Oh, Eden, darling—"

"Hush! It is something about your past, and I don't wish to know it—indeed, I do not. I shall remain with you in future, sharing your danger, of my own free will; but I don't wish to know more than I do already. Shall it be so?"

"No. You tempt me almost beyond human endurance, but I will be as generous as you. To-morrow you shall know all."

"And then?"

"Then I shall say farewell to you for ever."

"Wilfred!"

"It will be by your desire, not otherwise; but you must know—you must! I can see what the end will be. Eden, after to-night you will be removed from me as far as the stars from the earth. I feel as if it were my last night of life, and to-morrow I was going to the scaffold. Eden, will you let me say farewell to you before your toleration is changed to loathing?"

"That will never be."

"I know better than you. Look at me! Can't you see that my heart is breaking? Can't you see that to-morrow my life will be ended just as effectually as though a bullet had pierced my brain?"

"You frighten me!"

"It is for your good."

"Then, Wilfred, don't do it. I shall be happy in time—I shall indeed."

"Don't! I should go mad while waiting. Eden, will you—will you let me feel your arms about my neck once, that I may have it to remember!"

She lifted her bare arms, from which the sleeves of her night-dress had fallen, and laid them about his neck.

"I wish you would forget the past, as I am endeavouring to do, and live in the future for the future alone, Wilfred," she said, gently.

"My pretty one—my pure one! Every time I look in your eyes I feel myself a criminal, a scoundrel. Oh, Eden, it is so bitterly hard! My punishment is greater than I can bear."

"Your self-inflicted punishment, Wilfred."

"Every word, every tender, noble word you speak stabs me to the heart afresh. Ah, Eden, Heaven has not quite forgotten me when it can give me a moment filled with such rapture as this. If I could but forget for one short moment, I would be willing to endure for ages after all the punishment that Heaven could send."

"Then, forget, Wilfred, for my sake."

She lifted herself in his arms and laid her lips upon his.

It was such as a child might have bestowed in forgiveness upon a naughty playmate, but the hot blood rushed from Gordon's heart to his head, until his brain reeled under the intoxicating influence.

His arms closed more tightly about her, and the warmth of incalculable love throbbled through his veins with sledge-hammer force.

"It is the joy of Heaven," he muttered, hoarsely. "Oh, Eden! when to-morrow comes will you try to think that while I held you in my arms to-night it was as I might have held my own child? My love, my love!"

His face was buried for a moment in her

throat; but a loud peal of the door-bell startled him.

He lifted his head and sprang to the door of her chamber.

He seemed intuitively to know what was coming, and waited breathlessly.

It seemed to him hours instead of minutes before ever-watchful Catherine answered the summons, but the moment the door was opened he recognised the voice of Brooks, the detective.

"I want to see Wilfred Gordon," he demanded.

"He is not here," the servant answered.

"That is not true. He was seen at the window upstairs an hour ago."

"You are mistaken."

"I have a warrant to search the house. Stand aside, please!"

The paper was flaunted in the girl's face, and before she could make any resistance whatever, Brooks had entered the hall, closely followed by a policeman, Bertie Staunton and Malcolm Carlton.

Under the gas in the hall Gordon recognised them.

It was as he feared. Every resolution for good was forgotten. He determined to keep Eden at the cost of his life.

He sprang backward into her room and closed the door, slipping a heavy iron bar in place across it, fastened the other door in a similar way, then with a pistol clasped in either hand he waited.

Eden sat up in bed, her eyes brilliant with a burning fire.

"The front room!" exclaimed Brooks, hoarsely, and the noise of hurrying feet was heard.

## CHAPTER XXX.

The footsteps of the four men passing Eden's door subsided.

In the calm that followed she reached from the bed and laid her hand upon Gordon's arm, her face quivering with excitement.

"Go and leave me!" she gasped. "Think of your own safety! Quick!"

"I cannot!" he whispered, hoarsely. "I prefer death to leaving you. If the worse comes a bullet in my own head will end all."

"Then take me with you to some place of safety. This agony of suspense will kill me."

"So would moving you."

"No. My wrapper is there. Give it to me."

Lent strength through excitement, Eden slipped from the bed, her nightdress falling in graceful folds.

She threw the wrapper about her, thrust her feet into slippers, and turned again to Gordon, who stood watching her almost stupidly.

"I am ready!" she whispered.

He started violently.

A heavy hand was laid upon the door leading to the front room, and the rancorous voice of the policeman came through the thick panels, dully:—

"Open the door!"

Gordon did not reply.

For the first time he was beginning to think, and was rapidly revolving a plan in his head. It was filled with greatest danger for both, but in it lay their only hope. Still, for her sake he hesitated.

"Open the door, or I shall break it open!" shouted the detective.

"There is not a moment to lose!" whispered Eden, all unconscious that upon the other side of that door were love, honour, and happiness.

For a brief moment the nobility of Gordon's nature bubbled again through his selfishness; but only for a moment. His face was demure-like in its intensity of resolution.

Noiselessly as a cat springs, he reached a small, decorated safe in the room, and throwing open the iron door, took from it several instruments, which he thrust into his pockets, then drew out a rope ladder.

At the moment he fastened it securely to the back window ledge a heavy object was hurled furiously against the door.

Gordon's hand did not even tremble in his work. His lips were firmly compressed; every nerve in his body was rigid as steel.

The door shook violently, but did not yield. Eden seemed uplifted upon excitement. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes brilliant, her limbs firm.

Again a heavy object was brought down with tremendous force upon the door. It split a panel, but the iron bar held it. Then the blows fell thick and fast.

Gordon swung himself over the ledge, went down two rungs and waited, extending his arms to Eden.

She crawled over, and with an arm upon either side of her, to prevent the possibility of a fall, they rapidly descended backward.

The panel of the door gave way.

One blow more and the centre-piece fell. Waiting for nothing further, Herbert Staunton sprang over the iron bar and into the room.

An expression of intense disappointment marred the beauty of his features.

"Not here!" he exclaimed, huskily. "The room is empty!"

With practised eye the detective glanced about him. He took note of the only remaining door being barred from the inside, and instantly sprang to the window.

There was no sign of life without.

They looked at each other in utter confusion; then the detective unbarred the door and ran hastily down the steps to the basement. A tomb-like silence greeted him.

The search continued, but without Malcolm or Bertie. With bowed head the former sat in a chair, abandoning hope.

The latter, however, was looking about him for some evidence of a presence—the recent presence of the woman he loved.

He raised a scarf from a chair. A sweet, subtle odour that he never could forget told him that it was hers. He pressed it to his lips, and for a brief moment was blinded with tears.

He turned away, stifling a weary sigh, and saw upon the table a small bit of paper folded. Mechanically he picked it up and opened it.

"DEAR MRS. BRUCE," he read, "won't you come to me for a little while? I am alone."

—EDEN.

Excitedly he thrust the note into Malcolm's hand.

"Mrs Bruce!" exclaimed Malcolm. "Why, it is the name of the man who—"

There was no need to finish the sentence, for, looking up, they saw Mrs. Bruce standing within the door. She wore a wrapper of pale green silk, girdled at the waist with a cord of pink, her hair falling about her shoulders luxuriantly.

"Gentlemen, will you explain your presence here?" she exclaimed, haughtily.

"Certainly, madam," answered Herbert, endeavouring to curb his excitement. "You are Mrs. Bruce, are you not?"

"I am."

"We are looking for Wilfred Gordon. Will you have the kindness to tell us where he is?"

"These are his rooms. He was here to-night."

"Will you tell us who wrote that?" asked Malcolm, faintly, handing her the scrap of paper.

"Mrs. Gordon. I came up just as she finished it," answered Mrs. Bruce.

"Mrs. Gordon!"



"Yes, Eden—Mr. Gordon's wife. She has been very ill. I don't understand this at all. Where is Mrs. Gordon?"

"That is what we wish to discover," answered Herbert, hoarsely. "Who told you she was Gordon's wife?"

"She did. Her marriage certificate is in that drawer."

With breathless eagerness Herbert tore open the drawer. There upon the top of a supply of writing-paper was the certificate. He picked it up. There was no mistake. The name was plain enough—"Eden Carlton." The certificate was signed by a clergyman and witnesses.

Bertie staggered. A terrible giddiness had seized him. His worst imaginings had never pictured that.

The certificate fell from his hand, and Malcolm picked it up. One glance was enough.

His face assumed a greenish cast that was hideous. His hand closed upon it, crushing it.

"He shall pay for this with his life!" he hissed.

"Leave him to me!" cried Herbert, his voice firm, steady, and frightful in its strained quiet. "Let me repay him, then I shall be ready to die myself. A thousand devils would be less cruel than I. He shall reap as he has sown. Wait!"

### CHAPTER XXXI.

A noise in the hall aroused them.

Glancing up, they saw the burly policeman holding a man firmly by the collar, his hands handcuffed, and Brooks with another in the same condition.

A short shriek from Mrs. Bruce was drowned by a hoarse, growling oath from one of the men.

"What has he done?" she gasped, pointing to a shrinking wretch before her.

"Why, this 'un was found shovin' the queer yesterday," answered the policeman, indicating the man he held. "He heeled it and escaped, but to-night, while looking for that thief, Gordon, we found these two with a bag full of the queer between 'em, a polishing it off. That 'ere man is one of the worst in the country. He wears a wig, and is known as King Charles. Why, he's famous as a bunco steerer, but it was only a few days ago that it was found out that him and Mr. Bruce is the same."

Pale and erect as a statue, Mrs. Bruce listened, her eyes fixed upon the man before her.

"Hugh," she exclaimed, sternly, "is that true?"

He did not reply.

She grew a shade paler, but still never wavered.

"There is guilt written upon your face!" she cried, bitterly. "You have deceived me—miserably, cruelly deceived me. What have I ever done to you that you should humiliate me like this?"

A curious dogged expression glittered in the man's eyes.

He seemed upon the point of speaking, yet wavered. His hands within the iron cuffs were working spasmodically.

"Oh! Hugh, what have you done?" Mrs. Bruce continued. "I trusted you, and you have repaid me with neglect and disgrace. I might have understood why I was kept a hermit—why neither man nor woman crossed your threshold. It was because you were a thief, and—"

"Silence!" thundered the man, lifting his head with a sudden jerk. "Do you realise what your words are costing me, or don't you care?"

"I don't care! What consideration have you shown me? None! My house has been made the rendezvous for thieves; my wifehood a shame to me!"

He flashed upon her a look that was fiendish.

"Why don't you tell these men that you did not marry me of your own accord, and let me finish the story?" he sneered.

"Hush! I beseech you."

"Oh, you want to prevent the beloved name from being given to the public, do you? Well, you can't."

"Are you mad, Hugh?" cried the other braceleted man.

"No. I simply want these gentlemen to know that I married that woman through revenge. She was engaged to a man who loved her madly. He caused my arrest at one time and very nearly ruined me. I determined to have my revenge, and I did. I went to her with proof of his attachment to a young and lovely girl. My revenge was fully accomplished when I sent him a copy of my marriage certificate."

The pallor of Mrs. Bruce's face had deepened until she was ghastly. Her eyes burned, and seemed black as night contrasted with the whiteness of her skin.

"Yes, I trusted you!" she cried, hoarsely, every nerve tense and rigid. "I believed what you said, and what the girl herself said. Tell me, Hugh, and I will forgive you all the rest—tell me that it was not a lie!"

"You are anxious to believe it, then? I regret that I cannot gratify you. The story was untrue. I paid the girl to say what she did."

"Hugh!"

The exclamation was a faint scream, but the brute only laughed scornfully at her misery.

"He didn't die of grief," continued Bruce, mockingly, "as I hoped he would. He was uncomplimentary to you, my dear, in his sudden recovery. At first he dropped and pined, but a fresh face arose on his horizon, and he forgot you. Ha, ha! Ungallant of him, wasn't it?"

"Were all the vile things you told me of false as that?" panted Mrs. Bruce, her hands clasped upon her bosom.

"All—yes. You see, it was easy enough. I can't tell you what a disappointment it was to me when he did not do the heartbroken act and die. I did not care to risk the hemp rope by killing him with my own hand."

"Coward!"

"Yes. It is very kind of you not to put it stronger."

"All the vileness in the language condensed could not express my contempt of you. You think I do not know how to avenge myself? Listen! To-night, when this noise aroused me, I had just found the proofs of all your crimes. I had not had time to read, but I know where they are, and—"

With a low, hoarse growl, Bruce shook the loosened grip of the detective from his shoulder, and seized the woman by the throat. But for the confinement of his hands he might have killed her before the detective and Staunton together could unclasp the steel-like fingers from her throat.

She staggered back weakly, and Malcolm caught her.

Bruce stood like a demon.

"Did you discover, in your endeavour to find evidence to convict me, that you are not my wife?" he hissed.

Mrs. Bruce was erect in a moment, a dark flush overspreading her cheeks.

"That is false!" she cried, her hands clasped tightly. "You are saying that for some infernal purpose that will destroy me."

"Take your certificate and discover if any such clergyman exists. Find if any entry of it is in the marriage records. Do you think my revenge upon Walter Marchmont was no greater than to make you my legal wife! Bah!"

If he desired revenge upon her, it was full and complete.

She was like a lily, crushed and bruised, that has fallen under a blow from a heavy cane.

Life, joy, hope, were killed with one hideous thrust.

She sat down and dropped her head with a groan.

"Don't despair," Bertie whispered. "If he has lied throughout in other things to you may

not he be speaking falsely now? Take heart! Even if it be true, the man or woman who would blame you would not deserve the name. Will you take my hand as that of a sincere friend?"

"Yes, do so," sneered Bruce. "You and his wife will make a magnificent pair to draw to whom he finds her."

Staunton turned fiercely, his fist clenched for a tremendous blow, but caught himself in time.

"Your handcuffs protect you!" he exclaimed, densely. "But for them I do not doubt that I should have killed you."

"Thanks. It may be well to have them with me all the time. It must be pleasant to have one's wife run away. Why, she was right here in this room, and a second before the policeman entered the room where Chris and I were, Gordon passed through with her in his arms. She was clinging about his neck, and urging him to greater speed."

Bertie flushed dully.

"Why do you not take him away?" demanded Malcolm of the policeman. "Go! We will await your return here."

"Be sure you comfort my wife for her liege lord's absence!" exclaimed Bruce, contemptuously. "By-the-way, Carlton, will you make some explanation for me on 'Change to-morrow? Oh, I forgot! You will be looking for your sister!"

The remainder of his words were stifled by a wrench from the officer that nearly broke his prisoner's neck.

"Good-bye, Hilda!" he cried, as they led him away. "Perhaps you can persuade Marchmont to take you back, as the woman he fell in love with was Staunton's wife. I wish you joy in catching Gordon and his inamorata."

The mocking voice was drowned by the opening and closing of the front door. Bruce had passed from his wife's life, but the shadow was of ineradicable blackness.

It seemed as though the earth had opened and engulfed Gordon and Eden. There was absolutely no sign of them anywhere, and while every nook and crevice in the house had been searched nothing was discovered.

"I wish there was something that we could do for you," said Malcolm to Mrs. Bruce, at parting.

"You are very kind," she replied, dully; "but my life is dead. There is nothing to do now."

"You must not feel so. Many women have been the dupes of scoundrels. No right-minded man would ever censure you for a misfortune."

"You don't understand," she cried, bitterly. "I set myself up as a judge. I would even condescend no explanation, but wrote Marchmont a cold, cruel letter, that must have made him despise me. I know now, when it is too late, that I loved him always, and that the bitterness in my heart was not hatred, but a love wounded, but immortal."

"And he loved you?"

"Not to believe that would destroy every memory even of sweetness that ever sunned my existence. It will be a remembrance upon which I shall live."

"If he ever loved he will forgive all!" cried Bertie, huskily.

"Do you think I could ask it—I, who have so sinned against him? Could I ask him to receive an outcast into his home and heart? Never! You are very good, both of you, but the greatest kindness you can show me is to leave me alone with my sorrow, with the wreck of my life."

And they went. It was no time to offer either sympathy or condolence, and they knew it. They left her there in Eden's room, closing the door upon her.

The candle in the fairy-lamp flared up with a loud splutter and went out, leaving her in darkness; but she did not seem conscious of it. She was alone with her dead—Hope and Happiness!

## CHAPTER XXXII.

When Gordon reached the ground below the window, a light, nervous hand was laid upon his arm. By the light of the stars he recognised Catherine.

"Come this way," she whispered.

Unquestioningly he followed, holding Eden closely, and protecting her strength as much as possible.

Through an improvised gate in the rear fence Catherine led him, and he found himself in the yard leading into the next street. A woman emerged from the shadow of the house and steadily approached Catherine.

"The carriage is ready," she whispered. "Jim will drive. You'd better hurry."

Catherine nodded, and led Gordon and Eden noiselessly through the basement hall to the front gate, which stood ready opened.

She pointed silently, and through it Gordon vanished, while Catherine and her friend watched from a side window.

The carriage door was closed quietly and the vehicle driven away quickly, the clash of the horses' feet upon the cobblestones sounding like the clash of artillery in the silence of the night.

"Where are we going?" asked Eden, when she had recovered her breath.

"I don't know," he answered, drawing her closer to him for warmth, and wrapping the lap-robe about her. "I am trusting to Jim. We are safe enough now."

"You are quite sure?"

"Certain! Eden, why were you so much interested in my fate? Why did you not remain where you were, and let me take the consequences of my sin?"

"I could not. Could I so soon forget what you have done for me? Ah, Wilfred, there is much to be forgiven him who loves not wisely but too well. I am going to abandon myself to the one thought of loving you and forgetting your faults."

"Eden, my own! My gratitude, my great love makes me tongue-tied. I can say nothing—nothing. Heart and soul seem bursting. All repentance even is swallowed up in my mad worship of you, my soul's idol."

She smiled, put up her hand, and laid her palm upon his cheek.

"I believe you," she whispered.

He shivered.

"Suppose," he said, hoarsely, "that had been your brother—and Bertie Staunton searching for you to-night. Would you have gone with them, Eden?"

She hesitated a moment.

"Why do you ask me that?" she asked, painfully strangling a sob. "You know how impossible that is."

"But suppose it were true—suppose I had deceived you—what then, Eden?"

"If you deceived me now I should despise you."

He pretended to be arranging the lap-robe that she might not discover how he trembled. His whole nature seemed shaken at her answer. She would love him some time. He felt it, he knew it. He had risked so much that he would go on now to the death.

Wilfred drew himself up with a curiously set, resolute expression about the mouth.

"I have decided," he said, steadily. "I think a trip to Italy would do you a world of good, Eden. Will you go, my darling?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"When you will!"

"As—as my wife, or—my sister?"

"As—your wife, Wilfred, if you wish it so."

His heart trembled until articulation was destroyed. His quivering lips rested upon her dark hair, and she felt the arm that encircled her twitch convulsively.

She was inexpressibly sorry for him.

"Poor Wilfred!" she murmured, soothingly, "I think your faults must have been thrust upon you, for you are innately noble."

A long silence followed.

Eden was resting unresistingly against his

breast, half asleep through fatigue, now that the excitement of the moment was over; and Gordon, almost mad through passionate love, was endeavouring to put the memory of it from him that he might think and plan for the future.

There was no consideration of restoring her to her friends now. All that had passed with the danger of losing her. He would sell his heart's blood, drop by drop, to keep her; he would sell his very soul, even as Faust did to Mephistopheles.

His conscience pricked him concerning the illegality of their marriage, but he put it from him deliberately.

"What is marriage but a union of hearts?" he asked himself, feverishly, with his lips upon her short, curly hair. "She shall be nothing to me—nothing until her whole heart and soul are mine. I will win! Eden mine—mine. What can Heaven offer to compare with that? My wife!"

He had drawn her closer than he was aware. She smiled into his face a trifle breathlessly.

"Forgive me!" he whispered. "You see even my love is cruel."

"The paradoxical cruelty of tenderness," she answered, gently, "that kills through cherishing. If I give myself to you, Wilfred, how long before you will weary of me?"

"Could I ever weary of air, of the stars, of perfection, of an ideal? Oh, Eden, love me—only love me—not lightly, but with the full capability of your nature! Let it expand and engulf me, and I swear to you that, in spite even of the past and memory, I will make you happy! Tell me that you will try, dearest—darling!"

"I will try. How good you are to me, after all—after all!"

The conversation was interrupted by the stopping of the carriage before a dark, silent house.

Jim Lewis descended from the box and opened the door.

"How can I go in there?" Eden inquired, anxiously. "I have on only my wrapper and slippers."

"No questions will be asked," answered Gordon. "This man's wife lives here. We will remain only until to-morrow."

She allowed him to lift her from the carriage and assist her up the stoop, while Jim Lewis opened the door with a latch-key.

He left them in a rather musty parlour, while he went to find his wife; then returned and conducted them to an uncomfortably furnished room on the second floor.

"It's the only one vacant to-night," Mrs. Lewis explained, "but I hope it will answer."

"Quite well," replied Eden, pleasantly. Once again she and Gordon were left alone.

He looked at her uneasily.

"Would you prefer that I should remain in the parlour for the remainder of the night?" he stammered.

"No," she answered. "I am an awfully coward, and I should be afraid in here alone."

He set his teeth hard and drew a high-backed, hair-cloth sofa to an extreme end of the room, placing a half-worn paper screen between it and the bed.

"See what a nice room I have improvised!" he said, endeavouring to speak lightly. "I am sorry to subject you to such discomfort for even one night. Go to bed, dear, and forget all your trials in a sweet dreamless sleep. There will be no goblins to get you to-night. Good-night, Eden!"

"Good-night!"

He lifted her hand to his lips. She looked at him a moment curiously, then turned away, and, with her wrapper still on, laid down upon the bed and slept.

Gordon resolutely kept his eyes shut, but there was no sleep for him. Nature was in revolt.

He thought of everything—made plans and rejected them, seeing some trifling flaw by

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which detection might follow; but when morning came he was prepared for every emergency.

The future was as clearly outlined as a portrait by a master hand. He was radiant with happiness. Success, love, joy, were within his grasp. He had but to open his arms to embrace them.

He bathed his face with cold water, carefully rearranged his hair before the cracked mirror, then stood looking down upon Eden as she still slept, the fire in his cheeks and eyes, making him strangely handsome.

His arms were folded tightly across his breast, as though to resist the temptation of taking her in them.

"Eden," he said, gently.

The dainty lids raised.

"The breakfast bell has rung. Will you come down, or would you prefer to have yours here?"

She looked about the little, uncomfortable, stuffy room with a repressed shiver.

"I will go down, I think," she answered.

"You feel strong enough to go with my assistance?"

"I am very well indeed!" she answered.

"I think the excitement of last night was a magnificent tonic. Shall I be likely to see anyone except Mr. Lewis and his wife?"

"I think not. They let rooms, but take no boarders. Catherine will think to send your clothes to-day, and this evening, if you are well enough, I will engage passage on the *Etruria*, which sails at daybreak."

"You are going—"

"To Italy, to begin a new life, with Heaven's help."

There was such deep feeling in the words that the tears arose to Eden's eyes. All her soul seemed merged into sympathy for the man who was so cruelly wronging her. Every look of his eyes, every tone of his voice, seemed to deepen it; and while her heart was still bleeding over Bertie Staunton, she longed to put her arms about Gordon's neck and comfort him.

She laid her hand upon his folded arms and lifted her sweet eyes, filled with tears.

"Yes," she said, gently, "we will begin from to-morrow at daybreak, forgetting all the past and living each for the other and Heaven."

He bent his head and touched her brow reverently with his lips.

She turned away, and he looked idly from the window as she completed her simple toilet.

"I am ready," she exclaimed, standing beside him and resting her hand against his shoulder.

He took her in his arms and laid her head against his breast.

"Were this the end, death at the beginning, I should thank Heaven for having felt your trust, my pure one!" he murmured, wistfully.

"Oh, Eden, if only my life were clean!"

"Hush! We are to forget, you know! Let us go!"

He kissed her once tenderly, with holy calm, then drawing her hand through his arm led her down.

In the hall below Jim Lewis waited.

"May I see you for a few moments, Mr. Gordon?" he asked. "Your wife can wait for you in the dining-room. She will see no one but my wife."

"Will you excuse me?" Gordon asked of Eden.

"Certainly."

Jim Lewis opened the door without glancing in and allowed Eden to pass, closing the door upon her.

A woman was there before her.

She turned at Eden's entrance and uttered a low cry, falling back for a moment, then springing forward like a fiend and grasping the frightened girl by the wrist. It was Alice.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

"At last!"

The exclamation fell from Alice's lips with a thrilling cruelty that was horrifying. But after one moment of mute dismay Eden was herself again.

She drew herself up coldly and shook the woman's hand from her arm.

"How dare you touch me!" she cried, haughtily.

The woman laughed.

It was such a hideous, scornful laugh that Eden shivered.

"Touch you!" Alice exclaimed. "Touch you, indeed! Ha, ha! That is good, really very good. What better are you than I? Touch you! You are quite right, I should not, for I shall have to make you co-respondent in my suit for divorce against my husband."

Eden's face flushed hotly.

She thought that the brutal allusion referred to her marriage with Herbert Staunton.

"You will be good enough," she said, with quiet dignity, "to keep Staunton's name out of your conversation."

"Staunton? Puff! I was not speaking of him. He was only another fool with whom I passed a pleasant hour, captured his pocket-book, and departed."

Eden started violently.

Her heart throbbled for a moment maddeningly, then seemed to stand still with sickening dread.

"Do you mean," she cried, so hoarsely that her voice was almost unrecognisable—"do you mean that Herbert Staunton was never your husband?"

"Bah! No more than that milk-sop brother of yours."

Eden staggered backward, supporting herself against the wall.

Her face was ghastly, her eyes wildly bright. Every particle of strength seemed to have de-

served her, yet gradually a stony calm came over her, the quiet of hideous dread, of palpitating longing.

"Will you swear that to me?" she asked, the words coming through her set, numb lips curiously.

"Swear it? Of course I will, though I don't know that my oath is any better than my word. He was never even for a shadowy moment my husband, for I had one living at the time of our sham marriage."

"Then—"

"My dear, don't look so horrified. You are not the only woman in the world who has been deceived. Will you answer a question?"

"Ask it."

"Did you write a letter to Walter Marchmont, giving him my history as nearly as you knew it?"

"I did."

"Did you do it with Wilfred Gordon's approbation?"

"I did."

A green haze seemed to cover the woman's face from brow to throat. Her eyes glittered like those of a cat in the dark.

"Then my revenge is to be upon you both!" she hissed. "Let me take it upon him first. You have believed yourself his wife, have you not?"

"I have."

"Ha, ha! I thought so. Well, he knew that you were Herbert Staunton's legal wife; that he loved you. Wilfred Gordon knew that, I tell you, and more. He knew that even had you been free he could not have married you, for he is my husband!"

There was a moment of intense silence, then a slight colour surged to Eden's pale face.

(To be continued next week.)

(This story commenced in No. 2041. Back numbers can be obtained through all news-agents.)

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## Gleanings

"I NEVER hear anything that's said against me," remarked the deaf man.

The secret a woman keeps is the year she was born in.

THE saddest consequences of a great man's death are the verses that are written to his memory.

JAPAN'S FUTURE EMPEROR.—Few Royal children live in greater splendour than the heir presumptive to the throne of Japan, a boy eight months old. He is said to have no fewer than twelve nurses and attendants, and will be supplied with an English and French governess as soon as he is able to talk.

UPSTAIRS BY MACHINERY.—Every visitor to Paris has, we suppose, if he has had ladies with him, mounted to the higher storeys of such establishments as La Samaritaine by the moving staircase. An ingenious inventor has now devised a mechanical handrail, which practically hauls one upstairs. A handle is grasped, a button is pressed with the thumb, and up goes the handle, with the holder. On being released, the handle returns of its own accord to the foot of the staircase. The appliances will necessarily be of great assistance to the feeble, and will be no disadvantage in these sky-scraping days, to those who wish to preserve a sound heart in a sound body.

DIFFICULTIES OF HATCHING.—"An egg in the process of hatching," says an expert, "is remarkably sensitive to vibration. Half the failures that amateurs encounter in hatching out chicks by the incubator method are due to lack of precaution in providing against the effect of vibration on the eggs. The rumble of a train or the passage of a wagon along the street will spoil a whole incubator full of eggs if the faintest vibratory wave reaches the apparatus. Even such a little thing as the banging of a door in some other part of the house will destroy the chances of hatching out a brood, where care has not been taken to place the incubator beyond the reach of such disturbances. A thunderstorm always gives breeders a scare, as thousands of eggs may be spoiled by a sudden heavy thunderclap.

THE SIGN OF THE DRUGGIST.—Those huge glass bulbs of red and yellow and blue water, which are called show bottles, are gradually ceasing to be a feature of the decoration of druggists' windows. In the past they were as necessary to every drug store as a red and white pole is to a barber shop, but they have not, as the pole has, a well-defined history. All that druggists know of them is that they have been always used as window ornaments. The brilliant liquids that they contain are made cheaply and plainly of chemicals and water. Thus, a solution of copper and ammonia makes blue; bichromate of potash makes orange; aniline dyes have of late been used in the chemicals' place, but the liquids fade in a strong sunlight, and have frequently to be renewed. The liquids coloured chemically, on the other hand, last well-nigh for ever.

A PARISIAN SHILLING DINNER.—In conversation the other day with a Parisian caterer, the King's dinner was mentioned, and the question was asked, supposing the whole contract had been given to him, what sort of a dinner he could have given for the money in Paris. "My ordinary shilling dinner," he said, "with a glass of champagne to each guest with which to drink the King's health. Soup, fish, two dishes, and a dessert, with half a bottle of red or white wine or a bottle of beer, and the glass of champagne with the dessert. I don't say what brand of champagne, of course." "And the profit?" I asked. "It would be about a penny a head on every guest." The dinner, as served by the Parisian, would no doubt have looked more attractive in print than the repast which the English caterers will furnish, but it would hardly have suited the tastes of the English guests of the King.

A CYNIC has said that all men are brothers—Cains and Abels.

It frequently happens that an easy-tyred cab has an easy-tired horse in front.

A MAN'S idea of being good to a woman is to give her opportunities to be good to him.

GOLD IN THE RIVER.—According to a Foreign Office report on the district of San Francisco, dredging for gold in the river-bed is receiving increased attention. The area worked yields from 7½d. to 3s. 1d. per cubic yard, while the cost of working the dredgers, including an allowance for wear and tear of machinery, is said to be less than 2½d. per cubic yard. Many of the gold-bearing streams, whose bars and benches have been found unprofitable to work by other processes, are becoming available for this system of working.

SOME WOOL FIGURES. It is estimated that the value of the wool worked up in one year is not less than £23,000,000, and that in the course of its progress to the shelves of the tailor and draper it is increased in value between three and four fold. Whence comes this vast mass of material? A hundred years ago we were dependent almost entirely upon our own sheep. The great bulk of it comes from Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa; but a considerable portion, perhaps 20 per cent., comes from the River Plate, Asia Minor, the hill country of North India, and even Tibet.

HAIR JEWELS.—The fashion of wearing ornaments dates very far back, and many references to head-jewels are to be found in the Bible. The head-band, or *ferretire*, which was so fashionable in the Middle Ages, and is still used in evening dress coiffures, is mentioned throughout the Scriptures. On the subject of hairdressing a certain philosopher wrote:—Is it not charming to see a great quantity of hair artistically arranged on the top of the head? There is something so distinguished in beautiful hair that even though a woman should appear with all sorts of ornaments and robes covered with gold and precious stones, her efforts are in vain unless she have withal fine hair."

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE.—There are several methods of distinguishing between a true diamond and paste. Hydrofluoric acid will eat glass, but will not affect the genuine stone. A file makes no impression on the latter either. Finally, a real diamond continues to glitter when immersed in water. Some artificial rubies are of paste; others have the same composition as the genuine stone, which consists of corundum. The latter variety of imitation ruby has the proper hardness and specific gravity, and the colour is faultless. It can be distinguished from the true ruby only by a powerful magnifying glass. Singularly enough, the genuine article is identified by its defects. There are natural flaws in it not found in the imitation, although the imitation also possesses other characteristics (minute bubbles, for instance), which are readily recognised.

THE PENCIL.—Various more or less plausible suggestions have been made as to the origin of the strange-looking name "keelivine" for lead pencil, but they remain mere suggestions; the origin of the word is not certainly known. Coloured pencils, as well as those of black lead, were known as "keelivine." John Wilson writes of a red "keelivine." A "keelivine pen" was an ordinary lead pencil. "Put up your pocket-book and your keelivine pen then, for I daurna speak out an' ye hae writing materials in your hands, they're a scaur to unlearned folk like me," says old Edie Ochiltree in Sir Walter Scott's "Antiquary," and Monk-barns accordingly returns his pencil and his memorandum book to his pocket. Sir Walter himself, as reported by his biographer Lockhart, spoke of an egg marked with a lead pencil as a "keelavined egg." In Northumberland the name is usually contracted to "vine," and in Scotland very often to "keelie."

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY.—In pronouncing sentence, a Scotch judge once added: "Ye did not only kill and murder the man, and thereby take away his valuable life, but ye did push, thrust, or impel the lethal weapon through the bellyband of his regimental trousers, which were the property of His Majesty."

"FOR WAYS THAT ARE DARK."—The Court House at Singapore boasted a very valuable clock suspended from the wall directly opposite the Bench. One day during the session of Supreme Court a particularly meek-looking Chinaman entered carrying a ladder. Removing his hat, and bowing to the Bench with utmost gravity, he proceeded to remove the clock with businesslike expedition. Tucking clock under one arm, and ladder under the other, he passed out unchallenged, everyone present regarding him as a coolie sent to remove the clock for the purpose of cleaning it. Several days passed, and the clock not being returned, the magistrate reported the delay to the Public Works Department. The P.W.D. knew nothing whatever about it, and neither clock nor coolie was ever heard of again.

SOME WARSHIP FIGURES.—The "man in the street" glibly makes use of the phrase "weight of metal" when the relative armament of warships comes up for discussion; but doubtless he has no conception of what it means in the case of a great gathering of warships like that which took place off Spithead during the Coronation week. How many guns does our magnificent Fleet muster? Well, excluding obsolete craft, we find that an ordnance return would give the following numerical results:—Four 16.25in., 28 13.5in., 40 12in., 1 10in., 16 9.2in., 2 8in., 363 6in., 20 5in., 86 4.7in., 23 4in., 189 12-pounders, 392 6-pounders, 380 3-pounders, and 365 machine and light pieces, thus giving a grand total of 1,909 guns. If every gun in the Fleet—excluding machine guns and light pieces—fired one shot, 11,669 hundredweight would be the aggregate weight of the steel projectiles.

HAS ENGLAND A THRONE.—It has always been to a certain extent an open question, and one concerning which many disputes have arisen, as to which is really the throne of England, some arguing that the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey is entitled to be called the throne on account of its association with the past, and on account of its being the one which the Sovereign occupies at his or her Coronation, whilst others hold that the throne in the House of Lords is really the official throne, as it is occupied by the Sovereign for State purposes at the opening of Parliament. Others, again, say that there is no real throne in the strictest acceptance of the word, and that all the thrones, or chairs of State, in the various palaces throughout the kingdom are equally entitled to be called "The Throne," inasmuch as they are used as such when the Sovereign happens to be in residence at that particular palace, and holds any levee or other strictly official reception. The most general opinion, however, seems to be that the throne in the House of Lords is really entitled to be called "The Throne of England."

## All Women & Girls

who value their complexion, and who like to keep it fresh, clear, and beautiful, should use PERMOLINE SOAP. It keeps the most delicate skin free from pimples, roughness, blackheads, and eruptions, and you should give it a trial. Mothers should wash babies with it as it is most beneficial. Permoline Soap is supplied by chemists at One Shilling per Tablet, or sample will be sent post free for 1d., by Charab Soap Co., Ltd., Beccles.



## Society

**HEN GRACE THE DUCHESS OF SOMERSET**, owing to the fact that the wife of the Duke of Norfolk is dead, occupies the exalted position of premier Duchess of England.

**QUEEN MARGHERITA OF ITALY** has just made to science a gift which, besides being valuable, is interesting from its suggestion of her well-known love of everything that relates to the mountains. On Mount Rosa, at an altitude of some 14,000ft., she owns a beautiful chalet, and this, the Turin "Gazzeta del Popolo" says, she has, at the instance of Professor Angelo Mosso, the eminent physiologist, transformed into a laboratory for the permanent study of the influence of the atmosphere at great altitudes upon animal life.

In spite of the anxieties and disappointments of what should have been Coronation week, little Prince Eddie, the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, had his birthday present. Last year the King gave him a bicycle. For his birthday this year—June 23—the King had promised a bigger bicycle for a bigger boy. On his arrival in town on the Monday as he was operated upon on the Tuesday, the King, who must have been suffering acutely, and was straining every nerve to face the ordeal from which he had finally to retreat, found time to assure himself that the machine had been duly delivered to his grandson.

**EDWARD VII.** remains, for the present, uncrowned. In this respect he is like the majority of European potentates. The Czar and the Emperor Francis Joseph are crowned Kings, but few other monarchs have received this symbol of sovereignty. The new King of Saxony has not yet had time to get crowned, even if he intends to go through that ceremony, but Wilhelm II., German Emperor and the King of Prussia, has been on the throne fourteen years without being crowned either as Kaiser or King. Other Sovereigns who have never been crowned include the Kings of Italy and Spain and the Queen of the Netherlands.

The premier baroness of England in her own right is only eight years of age. Her name is Mona Josephine Tempest Stapleton, Baroness Beaumont, and she succeeded at the age of one year to her father's title owing to the gracious exercise of Queen Victoria's prerogative, for her father was killed whilst shooting, and left no son to inherit the barony, and when to his widow was born a second girl Her Majesty settled the title upon the elder daughter. Lady Beaumont, the mother of the fatherless children, is bringing them up at the family seat, Carlton Towers, in Yorkshire. There both little girls ride and drive their Shetland ponies, and lead a healthy outdoor life. The little Baroness Beaumont is a winsome-looking child with masses of dark hair and large dark-blue eyes.

**THE SHAH OF PERSIA** is staying at Carlsbad, with a suite of fifty-five persons. He has thoroughly entered into the routine of the cure, rises at seven, and walks in the neighbouring woods, where the servants bring him by turns Markbrunnen, Muhlbunnen, and Schlossbrunnen waters. He avoids frequented paths, preferring quiet walks in the depths of the forest, where he is seldom disturbed. The hostler expressed his fear that the Shah would slip on these rough paths, but His Majesty quietly said, "We have much worse roads in Persia." The Shah, whose fare is of the simplest, dines at twelve and sups at eight without wine or beer. In the evening he sits in the hotel balcony, and so much admires the tennis and basket-chairs placed for patients that he has ordered several for himself.

## Helpful Talks

BY THE EDITOR.

*The Editor is pleased to hear from his readers at any time.*

*All letters must give the name and address of the writers, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.*

**E. M. (Dumdee).**—A person with golden hair, dark eyes, and clear white complexion would rank as a blonde.

**M. C. W. (Kettering).**—Unless the young man has been an intimate friend, you should not enter into a correspondence with him.

**X. Y. Z.**—Specimen copies are furnished to anyone sending me a request for such, accompanied by full name and address.

**JANIE.**—The marriage would be legal if the girl has always been known by the name in question. The step-father has nothing to do with it, but the mother's consent would be required.

**GRACE.**—When a gentleman desires to become acquainted with a lady he should not attempt to accost her in the street or elsewhere, but should ask some mutual friend to introduce him.

**STEPHEN.**—The diamond is the most valuable of precious stones, and the hardest of all known substances. It consists of carbon, a simple or elementary substance, crystallised, and in its greatest purity.

**J. B. (Chatham).**—To remove putty from glass dip a small brush in nitric or muriatic acid, and with it paint over the putty adhering to the glass. After an hour's interval the putty can be readily removed.

**Mrs. CARTER.**—Stains from white napkins may be removed by mixing two teaspoonfuls of water with one of spirit of salt (muriatic acid). Let the stain lie in it for one or two minutes, then rinse the napkin in cold water.

**MOTHER CROW.**—If the young lady is sufficiently educated and capable of teaching she should experience but little difficulty in getting such a position in a small private school, even though she has not reached her eighteenth year.

**M. L. D.**—Crying will most assuredly spoil your eyes, and worrying ruin the complexion. Make up your mind to see the silver lining to every cloud, and you will be surprised how easily you will cure yourself of weeping at trifles.

**JOSHUA.**—To make a good writing ink, take of Aleppo galls (well bruised), four ounces; clean soft water, one quart; macerate in a clean corked bottle for ten days, or even longer, with frequent agitation; then add one and a quarter ounces of gum-arabic (dissolved in a wine-glassful of water); lump sugar half an ounce. Mix well, and afterwards further add one and a half ounces of sulphate of iron (green copperas) crushed small; agitate occasionally for two or three days, when the ink may be decanted for use; but it is better if left to digest for two or three weeks. This recipe will make one quart of fine ink, writing pale at first, but soon turning intensely black.

**MAGGIE.**—The word snow occurs in the Bible in Exodus, chapter IV., verse 6; and in Numbers, II. Samuel, Kings, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Matthew, Mark, and Revelation. Wind occurs in Genesis, chapter VIII., verse 1; and in Exodus, Numbers, Samuel, Kings, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, Matthew, John, Acts, Ephesians, James, and Revelation. Rain occurs in Genesis, chapter VII., verse 12; and in Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Kings, Ezra, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Joel, Zechariah, Matthew, Hebrews, Acts, and James.

**DIDY.**—A very simple way to clean castor bottles is to put in them a quantity of rice, add warm water, and shake them well.

**P. P. (Pontypridd).**—Bedcoats was the name given by the Americans, in the Revolutionary war, to the British soldiery, in allusion to their scarlet uniform.

**SNOWDRIFT.**—When a lady and gentleman are so infatuated with each other as the ones described, even though strangers to each other, the latter will doubtless overstep the bounds of conventionality and become acquainted with the aid of a mutual friend.

**MOAT.**—When a person dies and leaves an estate, all claims against it must be satisfied before any distribution can be made. If, however, no such estate exists, his descendants cannot be held strictly accountable for the debts he had incurred.

**PAMELA.**—To clean cane-bottom chairs, turn up the chair bottom, and with hot water and a sponge wash the cane-work well, so that it may become completely soaked. If very dirty, add soap. Let it dry in the open air if possible, or in a space where there is a thorough draught.

**RUPERT'S WIFE.**—To remove paint from stone, common washing soda has been found effective. It must be dissolved in hot water and applied hot. A correspondent who has tried it says he found that three pounds of soda to a gallon of water, laid on with a common paint-brush, answered the purpose admirably, softening the paint in a short time, so that it was easily removed with a stiff scrubbing brush. Afterwards, on adding a few ounces of potash to the solution, it softened it more readily than with soda only. The stone in both cases was a fine freestone.

**CONSTANT READER.**—The finest kind of clay, used for making porcelain or china, is called Kaolin, from Kao-ling, the name of a hill in China, whence the clay for Chinese porcelain is taken. It is white, or creamy yellow, and is softer and more crumbly than other kinds of clay. Good kaolin is found in many parts of Europe, and in the United States. When taken from the bed it looks like mortar. It is first mixed with water and run through several vats, in which the coarse particles settle, and the milky liquid is then drawn into a shallow vat where the finer parts sink to the bottom. When clear the water is drawn off, and the kaolin is then dried, when it looks like fine white flour.

**ASPIRANT.**—Manuscripts intended for publication should be written in a clear, legible hand, and all the rules of grammatical construction strictly adhered to. Unless a person understands capitalisation of proper names, ordinary punctuation and paragraphing, it would be useless to attempt to furnish literary material to this or any other publication. Still another most important matter should be borne in mind. A serial story, or sketch, or poem, no matter how beautifully penned, if devoid of incident, adventure, or sympathy, is not considered worth the paper upon which it is written.

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR EYES

It is impossible to take too much care of one's eyes, and those who value their eyesight will do well to send to **STEPHEN GREEN**, 270, Lambeth Road, London, for a little book "How to Preserve the Eyesight," which tells the story of a cure for all troubles of the eyes, eye-lashes, and eyelids. **SINGLETON'S EYE OINTMENT** has proved its virtues during 300 years, and it may be obtained of all chemists and stores in ancient pedestal pots for 2/- each.

FWS

**AUTHOR.**—My advice would be to give up the idea of becoming an author until you have mastered the rudiments of English prose composition, as the specimen before me shows a lamentable ignorance of the simplest rules of spelling, capitalisation and punctuation.

**BROWNIE.**—When a man so far forgets his good-breeding as to deliberately snub a lady friend by withdrawing his attention to her without a word of explanation for such a course of action, she should immediately cut his acquaintance, and have nothing whatever to do with him.

**W. L. B.**—Paint the corns with iodine every morning and night, and great relief will be experienced, in a very short time. This is a much quicker, safer, and more reliable remedy than paring them with a sharp knife or razor. Easy boots or shoes must also be worn.

**E. A. G. (Bury).**—Manteo, an Indian chief, was given the title of "Lord of Roanoke"—the first and last peerage ever created on the soil of the United States—by John White, who, in 1587, was sent from England to Roanoke Island, Virginia, as governor of an agricultural colony despatched by Sir Walter Raleigh.

**MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA.**—1. Gentlemen usually eat oysters from the shell direct; ladies sometimes use a fork. 2. Certainly, if you are the first to see him or her. 3. Use glycerine and gloves to your hands; put the glycerine on when retiring at night, and wear the gloves over it; also wear gloves as much as possible in the daytime.

**S. W. (Cardiff).**—In 1587 Sir Walter Raleigh founded a colony in North Carolina. The colonists arrived in three ships in July of that year, and on August 18 a daughter of the governor gave birth to a child, which was the first English child born in America. The colony had but a brief existence, and its history is wrapped in obscurity.

**GRAMMARIAN.**—To my knowledge, there are but three words ending in "ceed" in the English language, and my duties preclude the possibility of hunting up the fourth one, provided such exists. Doubtless you have plenty of spare time in which to pursue such a task, and will feel highly elated if your efforts are eventually crowned with success.

**JOINT STOCK.**—The word "limited" affixed to the name of a firm or company indicates the limitation of the responsibility of its members to the amount they have severally invested in such firm or company. The different laws regarding this subject require that in every case the word "limited" must be placed on all communications, etc., issued by such firms, thus establishing the liability of each member.

**ETIQUETTE.**—Ask the lady to do you the honour of allowing you to accompany her home. The usual form is "May I have the pleasure of escorting you home?" but it is not absolutely necessary to confine yourself strictly to such a mode of expression.

**SAILOR BOY.**—Seamen rank ropes under two descriptions—cable-laid and hawser-laid. The former are composed of nine strands, or three great strands, each consisting of three small ones; the latter are made with three strands, each composed of a certain number of rope-yarns.

**LUCKY DAY.**—March 14, 1855, fell on a Wednesday, which is generally esteemed a fortunate day. October 16, 1875 fell on Saturday, which does not signify wealth, but rather a quiet life. These are pure superstitions or fancies, upon which authorities disagree. Friday is the day which nearly all esteem unlucky, as thirteen is foolishly regarded as an unlucky number.

**STUDENT.**—The principal reason for opposing classical studies is that they take up the time and energy of pupils that had better be given to English and scientific studies of more value in practical affairs. Latin and Greek are of the greatest value to professional people, but to all who engage in business life they are rather ornamental than useful. The study of the classics affords valuable mental culture and discipline, and were time and means unlimited would prove a benefit to all.

**SLANG.**—The slang expression "painting the town red," is generally used to signify the queer antics of men who have imbibed liquor too freely, their various obstreperous actions rendering the atmosphere lurid, so to speak. No reliable explanation has ever been given of the origin of the phrase. At one time the cowboys of the Western States of America appeared to have a monopoly of it; then it was ascribed to the enterprising manager of a minstrel company, who made a habit of billing his attractions with posters printed in the most decided scarlet.

**FOND OF THE SEA.**—Being totally unacquainted with the duties of a sailor, you will be compelled to enter the navy in a menial position, in which the chances of promotion are very few and far between. An unskilled person would find it difficult to secure a position of any kind on a steamship, unless it be as coal-passer, and even then previous experience is required. You might enlist in the Marines in which service there is a probability of being ordered off on a cruising vessel to foreign ports. The requirements for enlisting in that corps are perfect bodily health, an ability to read and write, and a state of single-blessedness. The limit of age is, I understand, between 18 and 35 years.

**BENNY.**—Do nothing rash. The young man is not in a position to marry, and should have enough regard for you to wait until his circumstances will admit of taking such a momentous step.

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